

Libyan minister in Egypt for Lockerbie talks

CAIRO (R) — Libyan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Mohammad Beshari arrived in Cairo on Sunday for a surprise visit to discuss tension with the West over the Pan Am bombing. Two Libyans accused of bombing a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 face a public hearing in Tripoli on Tuesday. Libya refuses demands, backed by the U.N. Security Council, that they be handed over to Britain. Mr. Beshari was met by Foreign Minister Amr Musa. They headed immediately to a five star hotel for talks. Egyptian presidential adviser Osama Baz told reporters Mr. Beshari's meetings would focus on "the recent crisis between Libya and Western states. Egypt's position is firm on this crisis and is for intervening quietly to end it." Egypt hopes to dissuade Western governments from using military force against Libya, which has denied involvement in the Pan Am bombing or the downing over Niger of a French DC-10 airliner in 1989. Britain and the United States have accused Libyans Abdul Baset Ali Mohammad Al Meghbrahi, 39, and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, 35, of the Pan Am bombing, which killed 270 people. They also allege the men are Libyan intelligence agents. A Libyan official said on Saturday the two men, under house arrest since November, would face a public hearing on Tuesday.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Expert fears Third World missile race

LONDON (R) — A U.S. defence expert says on Monday that humanity may have to pay a "staggering" price as ballistic missiles with chemical or perhaps nuclear warheads proliferate in the Third World. Keith Payne of the National Institute for Public Policy in Fairfax, Virginia, says at least 24 countries could have ballistic missiles by the end of the century. "The Gulf war vividly portrayed the terrible threat posed to civilians by even primitive missiles," he says in a study paper published on Monday for the London-based Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies. "In the future the cost to societies from ballistic missile threats — in terms of human life and economic productivity — could be staggering." Mr. Payne says the rapid spread of missiles in the Third World means that embarking on conflicts like the Gulf war would be too hazardous without a missile shield like that envisaged under the U.S. Star Wars programme. It would have been much more difficult, he argues, to hold together the allied coalition in the Gulf if Iraq had used missiles with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads. "If he (President Saddam Hussein) had been able to threaten Washington, London, Paris, Ankara and Rome with such missile strikes, the coalition might have been deterred from pursuing any vigorous response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait," he says.

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14 people die in bus accident

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Fourteen people were killed in northern Egypt Sunday when a bus driver lost control of his vehicle and drove it into a tree, police said. A police official, who refused to be identified according to standing regulations, said 42 other people were wounded. He said the driver was trying to avoid hitting a car coming in the opposite direction and swerved his bus off the road into the tree. The bus was on its way from the village of Bilbeis, 55 kilometres northeast of Cairo, to the capital.

5 die in Japanese tanker blast

SINGAPORE (R) — At least five people were killed and 16 were injured on Sunday in an explosion aboard a Japanese-owned chemical tanker off Singapore's territorial waters, a police spokesman said. The toll could go higher, he said as police searched for survivors. The Panamanian-registered tanker Lotus M. was under repairs outside Singapore's port limit when the explosion occurred, he said. The 16,793-gross tonne Lotus M., operated by a Japanese company, Navis Ship Management Co. Ltd., Tokyo, carried Japanese, Korean, Malaysian and Singaporean crew and contract workers.

13 Indonesians drowned off Malaysia's Sabah

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (R) — Thirteen Indonesians were drowned after their boat capsized in rough waters off Malaysia's Sabah state on Borneo island, police said on Sunday. The bodies of the victims, workers returning home from Malaysia and seven children, have been recovered. Three others were still missing. Fishermen rescued 19 passengers of the ill-fated vessel which sank on Friday near Pulau Sebati, located off the northeast Sabah town of Tawau and Indonesia's Kalimantan.

5 party workers killed in Punjab state

CHANDIGARH, India (R) — At least five party workers were killed on Sunday in the latest violence in India's Punjab state, where Sikh militants are trying to block elections this week, police said. A spokesman said militants opened fire on more than 20 members of the Bahujan Samaj Party campaigning in the village of Nawapind Chandi, 140 km northwest of Chandigarh, the state capital. At least five of the party workers were killed and 17 were wounded, he said.

7 die in landmine explosion

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — A Sudanese doctor and six other people died when their car drove over a landmine in south Sudan, the official news agency said on Sunday. The Sudan News Agency said James Akily and six of his "aides" were driving from the provincial capital of Wau to the town of Agok in the southern state of Bahr Al Gazal when the explosion occurred. George Kongor, the state's governor, blamed the explosion on the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army which controls 90 per cent of the countryside in the south. The government holds the main cities.

Bodies of 2 Palestinians found in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The bodies of two Palestinians slain by masked militants were found Saturday in Gaza City in the occupied Gaza Strip, Palestinian reporters said. Also in Gaza City, troops opened fire on stone-throwing Palestinians, Arab reports said. Four youths were wounded, including a 9-year-old girl shot in the head. The army said two people were lightly hurt and one suffered moderate injuries in the clash in the Sheikh Radwan district. The slain men were identified as Salah Abu Koussa, 27, who was stabbed to death Saturday, and Waile Abu Aisha, 19, who was fatally shot by five bullets Friday night, the reporters said.

Israeli jets attack Palestinian refugee camps, Hizbollah convoy

Sheikh Musawi, wife, son, 10 people killed in the raids

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — The leader of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, his wife and son were killed in one of Israel's air raids on south Lebanon Sunday, security sources said. At least four other people were killed and 21 wounded in the assaults.

The sources, insisting on anonymity, said Sheikh Abbas Musawi, 39, and his family were riding in a black Mercedes limousine leading a convoy of several cars on a road near Shahrqya, 20 kilometres southeast of the port city of Tyre.

Two helicopter gunships fired five wire-guided missiles into the convoy, setting Sheikh Musawi's car ablaze and destroying two Range Rovers full of bodyguards tailing him. The names and ages of his wife and son were not immediately available.

Hizbollah's headquarters in Beirut confirmed that the motorcade was hit in a 4.3 p.m. (1430 GMT) air raid, but would not comment on the reported killing of its leader.

However, the Noor, or light, radio station which is operated by the party interrupted a talk show about two hours after the attack to play solemn music interspersed with verses from the Koran.

A Hizbollah spokesman confirmed Sheikh Musawi, his wife and baby son were killed when an Israeli rocket destroyed his Mercedes limousine.

At least five bodyguards in Sheikh Musawi's convoy were also killed during the air strike at 4.30 p.m. (1430 GMT), fundamentalist sources said.

"Sheikh Abbas Musawi was in the Mercedes which received a direct hit. He was killed," Sheikh Maher Hammoud, a pro-Iranian Sunni Muslim leader told reporters in the port of Sidon.

Two Israeli attack helicopter fired more than four rockets into Sheikh Musawi's motorcade. Two Range Rovers and Sheikh Musawi's Mercedes were destroyed and then a helicopter hit a Volvo about five kilometres from the ambush site as it ferried casualties to hospital.

Lebanese security sources said at least 14 people were killed or wounded in the raid.

The fundamentalist group is the most active anti-Israeli guerrilla faction.

Under Sheikh Musawi's leadership it stepped up its attacks on Israeli forces in the Jewish state's self-declared security zone in south Lebanon after Middle East peace talks opened last October.

The military command in Israel had no immediate comment on the report, but it had earlier confirmed two attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in south Lebanon.

The Lebanese police said two Israeli fighter-bombers and two helicopter gunships struck 'Ain Al Hilweh, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, and the Rashidiyeh shantytown farther south at about 1 a.m. (2300 GMT Saturday).

'Ain Al Hilweh is situated on the southeastern outskirts of Sidon, while Rashidiyeh is near Tyre, 40 kilometres farther south.

The warplanes dropped two rockets on three houses at 'Ain Al Hilweh's northern entrance, killing four inhabitants, including woman, her two sons and another boy. The three boys were aged between 9 and 13. Seven other people were wounded.

The dead later were buried in Sidon's cemetery, accompanied by a funeral procession attended by hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese mourners.

Police said the helicopters fired another three remote-controlled rockets onto the roof of a two-story building used by PLO chief Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction, wounding two guards.

Zeid Wehbe, Mr. Arafat's representative in Lebanon, had only recently vacated the stricken building, which he used as headquarters with the rest of his staff.

After the seven-minute raid on 'Ain Al Hilweh, the helicopters alone turned south to the Rashidiyeh camp to attack an empty two-story Fatah military base.

The base was demolished. Police said four adjacent houses also were damaged, wounding a woman.

The air raids appeared to be in retaliation for Saturday's attack by Palestinians on an army camp in Israel in which three soldiers were killed.

Col. Sultan Abul Inein, Fatah's overall military commander for the Tyre region, vowed to continue "military operations against the Zionist enemy until our land is liberated."

"The raids were in retaliation for yesterday's heroic attack. We will continue such attacks. We shall not bow down," he told reporters as he inspected the targeted base in Rashidiyeh.

Angry Palestinian men, women and children blocked the road to 'Ain Al Hilweh with burning tires and barricades to protest Israel's latest attack on Lebanon.

'Ain Al Hilweh has roughly 33,000 residents; Rashidiyeh has about 20,000. Rashidiyeh was one of the camps where the Lebanese army last July disarmed Palestinian fighters.

It was the second Israeli air raid on Lebanon this year. Nine civilians were killed and eight wounded when planes struck a PLO base belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command 14 kilometres south of Beirut on Jan. 10.

Thirty-one people were killed and 108 wounded in 23 Israeli air raids on Palestinian and Shiite Muslim bases in Lebanon during 1991. Most of the air raids were during the day.

Mr. Arafat accused Mr. Arafat of being behind the attack which he said was aimed at torpedoing the Middle East peace talks. Mr. Arafat indicated that his government would reconsider aspects of the peace process.

"We are talking about a unit that is connected to Fatah-Arafat," Mr. Arafat told Israeli TV. "The command posts of Fatah-Arafat are in Jordan," he contended, adding "Jordan is a partner in the peace process, sitting opposite us in the negotiations for peace, and clearly the two things — murder and terrorism, and the apparent participation in the peace process — do not go together."

PLO spokesman Ahmad Abdul Rahman told Reuters in Tunis: "What happened to Israeli soldiers in an army camp was done by Palestinian civilians using their legitimate right to resist against the Israeli army of occupation, which kills unarmed Palestinians, tortures and imprisons them."

"It is a resistance act, like the French resistance against Nazi occupation. The message is that occupation should end immediately, today, before tomorrow."

He said Israeli raids in Lebanon "show who is responsible for damaging the peace process."

PLO: Raids 'state terrorism'

An adviser to PLO leader Yasser Arafat said the Israeli raids into south Lebanon were "state terrorism" and showed the Jewish state was not committed to the Middle East peace process.

Bassam Abu Sharif, quoted by the Tunisian state news agency TAP, said, "the crimes committed daily by the Israeli government in south Lebanon prove that it is not serious in the Middle East peace process and is pursuing its expansionist plans."

Syria, Lebanon to attend bilaterals

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria and Lebanon said on Sunday they would attend Middle East peace talks in Washington on Feb. 24.

Syrian presidential spokesman Joubran Kourieh said the decision was taken during talks in Damascus between President Hafez Al Assad and his Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi.

The U.S.-brokered peace talks were launched at a formal opening conference in Madrid last October 30.

Israel and its immediate Arab neighbours have held three rounds of bilateral negotiations — one in the Spanish capital and two in Washington.

The talks have been dominated by procedural wrangling, primarily over the status of Palestinians from the occupied territories in a joint delegation with Jordan.

Syria and Lebanon boycotted last month's multilateral stage of the peace conference, saying it was a waste of time to go to Moscow because of Israel's refusal to trade land occupied in the 1967 Middle East war for peace.

Jordan attended the Moscow session, on secondary regional issues like arms control and water sharing, but the Palestinians did not take part after trying to introduce delegates to the conference table that were unacceptable to Israel.

Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber met his Syrian counterpart, Farouq Al Sharaa, in Damascus on Saturday to discuss the Washington talks.

Palestinians leave

A three-man Palestinian delegation, comprising members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Executive Committee Yasser Abed Rabbo and Sulaiman Al Najjab, as well as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's advisor for the occupied territories Akram Haniyyeh Sunday left Amman at the end of a four-day visit to Jordan.

The Palestinian officials were received Saturday by His Majesty King Hussein, who exchanged with them views on progress in the Middle East peace talks, as well as the fourth round of talks, due to be held in the U.S. capital on Feb. 24.

The delegation members also had a meeting with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber. Mr. Abed Rabbo and Mr. Najjab left for Damascus for talks with Syrian officials on the peace process, while Mr. Haniyyeh returned to his base in Tunis.

restoring public order and stability.

— To clean up public enterprises to improve efficiency.

— To encourage small and medium industries to develop national production and jobs.

— To meet social needs for food, housing and infrastructure.

— To promote rural development by recovering farmland.

— To appeal for overseas investment through cooperation and partnership agreements.

Mr. Boudiaf said the government would pursue the transition to a free market and liberal economy. But he added, "the state must keep control of the great strategic sectors."

Algeria plans to open its oil and gas fields to foreign companies, and officials say it is actively negotiating with about 30 companies.

'Nearly 6,000 held in Algeria'

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The Algerian authorities may be holding up to 6,000 people in detention camps set up under a state of emergency, head of state Mohammed Boudiaf said on Sunday.

"Regarding the camps, there may be 5,000 or 6,000 (people in them)," Mr. Boudiaf told a news conference. A figure of 10,000 detainees was too high, he said earlier.

The ruling High Council of State imposed the state of emergency a week ago to stamp Muslim fundamentalist agitation for an Islamic state and a return to elections.

About 50 people had been killed and nearly 300 wounded in days of clashes between security forces and the fundamentalists.

The emergency gives the authorities the power to set up detention camps but Mr. Boudiaf was the first official to confirm they already exist.

"All those who trouble public order will be put in jail," added Mr. Boudiaf, who is chairman of the five-man ruling council.

Algeria was in a state of anarchy before the council was sworn in last month, he said. "We had to avoid war and bloodshed and we were close to that."

Mr. Boudiaf said acts of violence against the state might continue, but added: "Terrorist actions will be small not large."

Mr. Boudiaf spoke, the Algerian news agency APS said two gunmen had fired on the guard post at the admiralty barracks near Algiers port but there were no casualties.

The security forces had returned fire, causing panic among civilians, the agency added.

Late on Sunday security forces were besieging the building from where the shots apparently came.

Mr. Boudiaf said violence could continue, but added: "Algerians are fed up with these Fridays of terror and doubt."

The Islamic Salvation Front, the main opposition to the military-backed rulers, has used weekly prayers on Fridays as the signal for the start of its street protests.

It had planned a march through Algiers on Friday but was deterred by a massive show of force by troops and police.

Djerejian says Iraqi regime is 'brittle'

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — The United States is confident President Saddam Hussein will be toppled because his regime is "brittle," with "growing signs of problems from within" the Iraqi hierarchy, a senior U.S. official declared Sunday.

"The conclusion we draw is that his situation is not improving," said Edward Djerejian, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

He said of President Saddam: "We characterise his regime as brittle, something that seems to be hard, but is easy to crack."

Mr. Djerejian, speaking to reporters, did not elaborate on opposition within the Baathist regime in Baghdad to President Saddam's rule.

But opposition sources have claimed in recent weeks that organised opposition with the Baath and other key institutions of state is growing.

Despite U.N. efforts to throttle the Iraqi regime with trade sanctions, the Iraqi leader had defiantly held onto power since his army was defeated in the 1991 Gulf war.

Mr. Djerejian noted that the U.N. sanctions imposed after the Iraqis invaded Kuwait in August 1990 have seriously weakened Iraq's economy because Baghdad cannot export its oil.

The U.S. official claimed President Saddam has lost control of parts of Iraq because of rebellions by Shiite Muslims in the south and Kurdish guerrillas.

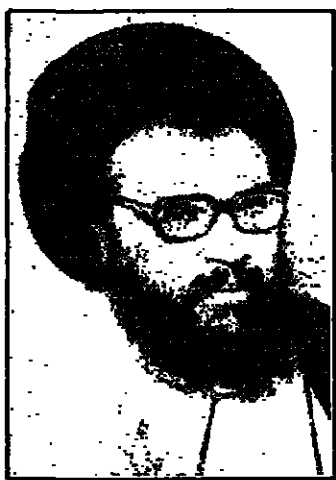
"What we look forward to is the emergence of a government in Iraq that is representative of the Iraqi people and that will in the first instance live in peace with its own people, and in the second instance live in peace with its neighbours," he said.

Mr. Djerejian arrived in Kuwait from Saudi Arabia Sunday on the second leg of a tour of the six Gulf Cooperation Council states. The others are the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar.

Mr. Djerejian, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria, is scheduled to leave for Bahrain Monday.

He said his visit to the Gulf Arab states was aimed at "helping them establish the means for their legitimate self-defence... and encouraging collective security arrangements so that no future Saddam Hussein can threaten the security, stability and peace of the region."

An aide to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said on Thursday the Israelis were innocent and their continued detention



Abbas Musawi

building, which he used as headquarters with the rest of his staff.

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PLO spokesman Ahmad Abdul Rahman told Reuters in Tunis: "What happened to Israeli soldiers in an army camp was done by Palestinian civilians using their legitimate right to resist against the Israeli army of occupation, which kills unarmed Palestinians, tortures and imprisons them."

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Rafsanjani envisages new Muslim 'world power'

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Sunday that Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, the ex-Soviet Muslim republics and the Gulf states were a potential "world power."

Mr. Rafsanjani, the host of a regional summit that was beginning Sunday, made the comment at Tehran airport where he welcomed Turkmenistan President Safarmurad Niyazov.

Regional leaders were converging on Tehran for the two-day meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation, founded in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

In remarks reported by the Islamic Republic news agency, Mr. Rafsanjani said Western powers often claimed that the newly independent ex-Soviet Muslim republics had no place to turn to.

The Iranian leader said that on the contrary, these states' membership in ECO would bring them into a great Muslim family, IRNA reported in a dispatch monitored in Nicosia.

"The ECO members as well as the Persian Gulf littoral states can form a powerful political-economic body in the region and present themselves as a world power," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

Also arriving Sunday was the president of Azerbaijan, Ayaz Mutalibov, who said at Tehran airport that he hoped Iran would use its influence to "end violence in the region."

That was a reference to hopes Iran could mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia in a territorial dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

Hundreds of people have been killed during four years of fighting over the mainly Armenian enclave, which is surrounded by Azeri territory.

ECO, which has been around for 27 years under different names, has had little international impact.

But earlier this month, ECO granted membership to Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan is attending the summit, along with Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, which are also expected to join ECO.

Iran, which regards itself as the leader of more than one billion Muslims around the world, is the visionary behind a proposed Islamic common market stretching from the edge of Europe to the Indian subcontinent, and north to central Asia and the Caucasus.

The agenda for the summit was set by ECO foreign ministers meeting in Ankara earlier this month.

Apart from taking in new members, Mr. Rafsanjani, Turkish President Turgut Ozal and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are to approve a 10 per cent lowering of tariff barriers between them and discuss steps towards freer trade and movement of people.

The meeting will also give them an opportunity to discuss regional disputes such as the civil war in Afghanistan and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Iran, Pakistan and Turkish all say they support United Nations peace efforts for Afghanistan, seen as another potential ECO member.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said on Friday he would visit Yerevan and Baku next week in a peace mission requested by Armenia. Both sides ignored an earlier Turkish offer to mediate in the fight.

ECO started out as a loose economic pact between the Muslim states which had been part of the military Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) set up by the United States and Britain in the 1950s to deter the Soviet Union from expanding southwards.

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U.N. drive to end hostage crisis falters

BEIRUT (R) — A United Nations campaign to end the Middle East hostage crisis has run out of steam, leaving some parties to the process angry and a U.N. negotiator fearful of a kidnapping threat.

Diplomats said U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali would soon have to decide what to do with the U.N. initiative under which nine Western hostages were released last year.

"Nothing is moving and I am afraid the remaining obstacles are too big to bring a comprehensive end to this. Most sides are angry with each other," said a diplomat close to the problem.

"Momentum disappeared when the last American hostage was freed (in December). Now most people are complaining about what they didn't win rather than working to break the deadlock."

The diplomats said the outstanding issues might have to be dealt with in a piecemeal manner only after tempers cooled.

They said Boutros Ghali needed to decide soon whether to retain Giandomenico Picco as his chief hostage negotiator, to appoint someone else or scrap the operation, which began under the U.N. secretary-general's predecessor, Javier Perez de Cuellar.

They said Picco feared returning to Lebanon for face-to-face talks with pro-Iranian militants as they had discussed snatching him while he was negotiating in a

darkened room for the release of U.S. and British hostages.

"Picco was meeting the kidnappers when he heard one suggest to the others that more would be gained by kidnapping him there and then. It was absolutely terrifying. They discussed it between themselves for some time but finally allowed him to go."

"The incident shocked Picco deeply," the diplomat added.

Church of England envoy Terry Waite was kidnapped in Beirut in January 1987 while working for the release of U.S. hostages. He was released on November 18 — the last Briton to be freed.

A Muslim fundamentalist source said a kidnapper group may have threatened to kidnap Picco but dismissed the threat as "a game."

Perez de Cuellar last August hoped to arrange a series of exchanges of all Western hostages and Israeli prisoners held in Lebanon for Arabs held by Israeli and Lebanese militia allies.

Muslim fundamentalist sources in Beirut, however, said it was Iran which won the release of all the U.S. and British hostages and the United Nations only provided a cover for this.

"It was an Iranian decision to get the hostages out. Those who freed hostages follow Iran. Picco negotiated with all sides and tried for a larger deal but the impetus came from Tehran," a source said.

The outstanding issues in the Middle East hostage saga are:

German aid workers Heinrich Struëbig and Thomas Kempfner, kidnapped in 1989 by pro-Iranian zealots related to two Lebanese brothers jailed in Germany for kidnapping, murder and hijacking.

Struëbig and Kempfner were excluded from an Iranian-backed decision to free the last Western hostages unconditionally. Their captors still want a swap with Germany.

About 300 Lebanese prisoners, including pro-Iranian Hizbullah cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid who was kidnapped by Israeli commandos in 1989, held by Israel or its South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia allies.

Three Israeli soldiers who disappeared in Lebanon in 1982, the remains of two Israeli soldiers captured in 1986 and Israeli Airman Ron Arad, whose plane was shot down in 1986.

Arad is the only Israeli missing in Lebanon known to have survived capture. Israel has been angered because the U.N. drive failed to secure his release or establish who is holding him.

Four Iranians kidnapped by a Christian militia in Lebanon in 1982 whom Iran demands be freed. Diplomats have said they were killed shortly after being taken and believe Tehran knows that but raises them from time to time as a bargaining chip.

Cuba, PLO renew pledge of mutual support

MEXICO CITY (AP) — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Vice President Jose Ramon Fernandez of Cuba reaffirmed pledges of solidarity at a meeting in Mexico City on Saturday, the official Cuban news agency reported.

Fernandez delivered a message to Arafat from Fidel Castro. The Cuban news agency report, monitored in Mexico City, did not give details on the contents of the message.

Fernandez "declared Cuba's unrestricted support for the fight of the Palestinian people for the recuperation of their legitimate rights," and Arafat "reiterated his solidarity with the Cuban people and their supreme leader," the report said.

The two met in the capital city of Mexico, where the PLO is headquartered.

Fernandez' meeting was part of a Middle East tour that started more than two weeks ago. He has met with leaders of Syria, Iran, Libya and Tunisia to strengthen and develop Cuba's ties with Third World and Non-Aligned nations.

Israel's Peres learns Russian to win immigrant votes

ASHDOD, Israel (R) — Twice a week Israeli Labour Party leader Shimon Peres breaks his frantic routine to study Russian — the language of the thousands of immigrants who could decide Israel's next prime minister.

"He's an excellent student. He never misses a class," said Sofia Landver, a Labour activist who started teaching him Russian 18 months ago.

She said Mr. Peres can read newspapers published for the 400,000 newcomers from the former Soviet Union who could hold the key to elections for Israel's 120-member parliament on June 23.

"Russians could account for 10 seats in parliament," said Landver, who immigrated to Israel 12 years ago from St. Petersburg, then named Leningrad. "Every politician wants their votes but Peres was the only one who chose to invest his time in them."

Landver praised Peres for squeezing Russian lessons into a schedule that allows little time even for sleep.

"I don't give him homework," she told Reuters. "I tried at first and realised he's not a normal student."

Landver, a council member in Ashdod, a coastal town that is home to thousands of immigrants, is convinced that Mr. Peres is the most popular politician with the newcomers.

"He does not go a day without meeting immigrants," she said.

Mr. Peres, battling to shake off



Soviet Jews now represent 10 per cent of Labour's voting members. They could determine who will lead Labour against the Likud Party. Photo shows Soviet Jews gathering at the Israeli mission in Moscow to apply to emigrate.

the image of a loser, will need immigrant support just to secure his party's backing before he can go on to fight for the prime minister's job.

The 67-year-old, who has led Labour to defeat in four elections since 1977, will compete with long-time rival Yitzhak Rabin and two other party veterans for the leadership on Wednesday (Feb. 19).

With Russians now representing 10 per cent of its 150,000 voting members, they could determine who will lead Labour against the Likud Party, almost certain to be headed by Prime

Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Landver, who declines to be paid for tutoring Mr. Peres, gets starry-eyed as she sings his praises. The 41-year-old is confident her pupil will be prime minister, saying no other politician can solve immigrants' problems.

"He the only one who has an immigration plan to give them jobs and a dignified life," she said.

Unemployment in Israel is at a 20 year high of 11 per cent, and tops 50 per cent among immigrants in some areas. Immigrants trained in medicine, physics and

computing line up for free meals at soup kitchens and handouts at vegetable markets.

A recent public opinion poll indicated that 27 per cent of Russian immigrants would vote Labour and 14 per cent would vote Likud. But 40.9 per cent were undecided.

Pollsters say Likud's failure to provide jobs and housing has hurt its chances. But the immigrants, adverse to anything smelling of the socialism they left behind, frown at the Labour Party's socialist anthem and red flag.

Mr. Peres' mixed record in 40 years of public life also makes it hard to predict a winner.

He can point to impressive achievements — he brought Israeli troops home from the failed Lebanon invasion in 1985, and the next year cut three-digit annual inflation to under 20 per cent.

An opinion poll in mid-1986 found him the most popular prime minister in 10 years. But since that high point he has been dogged by a reputation as a loser and schemer.

Mr. Peres is a tragic victim of Israeli politics. Once a man has been labelled, it's hard to remove the tag," said Mr. Landver, who blamed party enemies for bashing Mr. Peres' image.

But she dismissed suggestions that Mr. Peres should retire, pointing at 76-year-old Shamir. "If Shamir does not want to retire, why should Shimon Peres?"

Iraq launches new war on profiteers

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq launched a crackdown on the runaway free market on Sunday to punish traders cashing on hardship and shortages caused by U.N. sanctions.

The ruling Revolution Command Council (RCC) issued a decree announcing stiff new punishment for trading excess profit on food and essential goods like soap.

The decree authorised President Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Interior Minister Wabban Ibrahim Al Hassan, a known hardliner on law and order, to get tough.

It reflects government awareness of grumblings among ordinary Iraqis who find subsidised rations meet

less than a third of their daily needs and must buy the rest on the free market.

Saddam acknowledged last week that free market prices were abnormally high. He urged Iraqis to shun luxury items such as clothes and pledged that he himself would buy only essentials for a year.

Traders now face fines up to 100 per cent of their profits, confiscation of their goods and a month in jail, said the decree, which was published in Iraq's official press.

Previously, there was a haphazard system of fines and the worst market traders expected to have their stalls

less than a third of their daily needs and must buy the rest on the free market.

The decree also announced a new campaign against smuggling out of Iraq. The government is known to be worried that gold and other goods are leaking across its borders to buy foreign exchange.

Technically Iraq cannot export anything under the U.N. sanctions. The Bush administration, which says it wants to get rid of Saddam, has said it is studying ways of tightening the embargo around Iraq's notoriously leaky borders.

Scrap metal, machinery and cars are being smuggled to Turkey, Iran and even Syria, a U.S. ally in the Gulf war, depriving the government of resources it needs to repair war damage.

Somali warlords agree on safe corridors for aid

NAIROBI (R) — Leaders of one of the main factions fighting in the Somali capital Mogadishu have agreed to allow food supplies to move to starving civilians along safe corridors. Mogadishu radio reported.

But aid workers in Mogadishu, contacted by radio on Sunday, said gunfire was continuing despite a truce agreed on Friday by rival Somali warlords.

The radio, monitored in Nairobi, said late on Saturday that U.N. representatives agreed on aid corridors during talks in Mogadishu with Abdi Uthman Farah, vice-chairman of the United Somali Congress (USC).

Mr. Farah briefed United Nations aides on the general situation in Mogadishu, and outlined how the USC would help distribute humanitarian relief.

Officials of the U.N. World

Food Programme and the U.N. Children's Fund discussed how to send food and medical aid to the Somali people, the radio said.

In talks on Friday at the United Nations in New York, representatives of rival warlords Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Mohammad Farah Aided pledged an immediate halt to fighting and agreed to sign a formal ceasefire by the end of the month.

Food and other aid supplies have been flown to Mogadishu in an effort to stop suffering, but aid workers say they have been unable to ensure fair distribution because of fighting and the division of the capital into rival camps.

On Saturday, a U.N. official in Nairobi said 139 people had been killed and 729 wounded in fighting since Wednesday, when the New York talks began.

Syria will stay on U.S. terrorism list for 1992

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has rejected Syrian requests to be dropped from its list of states which sponsor terrorism, a senior State Department official says.

Syria has been pushing hard to be removed from the list as its reward for backing the United States in the Gulf war and cooperating in Middle East peace efforts. The Syrians last November for the first time set down for direct peace talks with Israel.

The State Department reports to Congress each year on global terrorism and includes a list of states which in its view cooperate with terrorist groups. Such countries are ineligible for preferential trade relations with the United States, trade credits or loans from international financial institu-

tions.

Last year's report listed six such states — Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Cuba and North Korea. The official told Reuters they will be cited again when the report is updated in April.

"The same six will be there, that's the four in the Middle East plus Cuba and North Korea," the official said last week.

Damascus argues that it has not been directly involved in what the United States regards as terrorism for years. Its case was boosted after it was cleared of involvement in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland. Syria also helped gain the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon.

But the official said its record was still far from satisfactory.

"Syria continues to be the host to a wide range of terrorist groups in Syria itself and in Bekaa Valley in Lebanon under the noses of Syria troops," he said.

The official said that among such groups were the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, the Turkish Urban Guerrilla Dev Sol Organisation, the Kurdish Workers Party or PKK, the Japanese Red Army faction and a collection of radical Palestinian groups including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command.

If Syria wanted to be removed from the list, it would have to expel all these groups, shut down their operations and publicly renounce terrorism, the official said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Hrawi leaves for Mideast talks in Syria

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's President Elias Hrawi left for the Syrian capital Damascus on Sunday for talks on the Middle East peace process, Lebanese officials said. They said Mr. Hrawi was accompanied by his Foreign Minister Faris Bouze and the head of the Lebanese delegation at the peace talks, Suheil Shammah. Hrawi is expected to confer with Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad to discuss a unified position on Arab participation in the fourth round of peace talks, scheduled to begin in Washington on February 24. Lebanese officials said it was not clear if Hrawi would meet the foreign affairs chief of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Fawuk Kaddouni, who is also expected to fly to Damascus on Sunday. The Arab-Israeli talks opened last October in Madrid.

Judge refers British woman's custody case to another court

CAIRO (AP) — A judge Sunday dashed the hopes of a British woman of gaining custody of her children from their Egyptian father by referring the case to another court instead of issuing a verdict. Tears welled in the eyes of Pamela Green, 37, of London, after her lawyer gave her the news, but she declined to talk to reporters as she left the crowded Agouza Courthouse. "We were expecting a verdict today but instead, the judge decided that this case does not fall under the jurisdiction of his court and referred us to the South Cairo Primary Court, foreigners section, to start over again on March 8," lawyer Medhat El Zohary told the Associated Press. El Zohary said he was disappointed, especially that since the case started June 26, 1990, the court had held 19 sessions to review it. When Mrs. Green and her Egyptian-born, British national husband, Abdul Salam Ahmad, divorced in 1988, she won custody of her daughter Yasmeen, 11, and sons El Sawy, 8 and Sammie, 7 in Britain. But her former husband brought them to Egypt on holiday and kept them, ignoring another British court's order that he return the children to England. She has been

unable to see her children and has since been trying to gain their custody from an Egyptian court. In December 1990, she used four "friends" to try and kidnap her children but only succeeded in taking her daughter Yasmeen and flying her to England. Her father-in-law stabbed her during the kidnapping. She was recovered after extensive surgery.

Iraq says impossible to coexist with Saudi family

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq may never find it possible to normalise relations with Saudi Arabia's ruling family, according to a Sunday editorial in Babel, an Iraqi newspaper owned by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday. Babel said the Saudis committed a grave mistake when they allowed their country to be used as a springboard for the U.S. and its allies during the Gulf war. They (the Saudi rulers) ... will have to bear the consequences," Babel said. "After a decade and a half they discover, and we too, that coexistence was a dream in the past and will be hard to achieve in the future," the editorial read.

U.S. killed S. African arms deal with Saudis, paper says

JOHANNESBURG (R) — U.S. pressure has killed a South African deal to sell Saudi Arabia artillery worth up to \$600 million, a Johannesburg newspaper said on Sunday. The Sunday Star quoted unnamed sources as saying Washington had persuaded Saudi Arabia to cancel the purchase of up to 200 G-6 guns from South African arms maker Armscor. A U.S. embassy spokesman in Pretoria would not confirm or deny the report but said Washington had held talks with South Africa as part of world-wide efforts to limit weapons proliferation. The spokesman rejected newspaper reports that Washington was concerned that the African National Congress, which is friendly with Cuba and Libya, was about to inherit South Africa's arms industry. "On the contrary, we are encouraged by progress in talks on a new constitution and are optimistic about the country's future," the spokesman said.

Eritrea celebrates freedom and rebuilds

ASMARA, Ethiopia (AP) — As dusk settles on this pastel, Italian capital of Ethiopia's northernmost province, its tiled, cafelined sidewalks fill with a happy promenade.

"We couldn't walk on the sidewalks before," said Tegreab Garmaz, a lifelong resident. "We had to walk in the street or risk being shot."

The 33-year-old school teacher was referring to the occupation by Ethiopian government troops during a 30-year war for independence.

Last May, the occupation ended with the fall of President Mengistu Haile Mariam and the flight or capture of 100,000 of his soldiers, who were under siege in Asmara for more than a year.

Eight months later, Eritreans still rejoice in their freedom even as they face the hugely difficult task of rebuilding their ravaged country with little immediate help from the outside world.

In the latter years of the civil war, as Eritrean rebels pushed ever closer to Asmara, armed guards kept people off sidewalks in front of the hundreds of buildings that housed Ethiopian soldiers, officials or government offices.

"Sometimes they hung tin cans on strings and strung them along the sidewalks," Ms. Garmaz said.

"If you touched the string and rattled the cans, they'd shoot."

With the acquiescence of another rebel group that chased Mengistu from the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, the Eritreans set up their own provisional government after capturing Asmara. They plan a U.N.-sponsored referendum on independence in 1993, to be followed by multiparty elections.

Until it is recognised as a nation, Eritrea will have to tackle the job of rebuilding without large-scale foreign aid.

It has begun the task with a will.

The 90,000 young men and women of the Eritrean rebel army have voluntarily gone to the countryside to repair and build roads and dams, plant trees, drill wells and reconstruct villages shattered by bombs and shells.

They will serve without pay until after the referendum, receiving only food and shelter. All government officials also are working without pay.

"What is very clearly visible is that they are trying to do something with what they have," said Arild Jacobsen of Norwegian Church Aid.

"They lack money and resources, so the improvements have been small but constant. But over time, these things add

up and people see the improvement in their lives."

Asmara, a city of about 300,000 on an escarpment overlooking the Red Sea, may be the cleanest, safest city in Africa. Even its alleyways are tidy. Residents and visitors alike have no fear of walking the streets at night.

Government offices in Asmara are unguarded. Not even soldiers are allowed to carry weapons in the city.

Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, is just the opposite. It is an armed camp. Crime is rampant, gunfire crackles nightly and raging former rebels patrol the streets in vehicles mounted with heavy machine guns.

Eritreans also have surpassed their neighbours to the south in revamping economic policy and adopting a liberal investment code.

"We feel we're in a situation comparatively better than many African countries because of the fact that we are starting from zero," Issaias Afewerki, head of Eritrea's provisional government, said in an interview. "The average African state has no hope of resolving its economic problems."

Mr. Afewerki pointed to the skills developed in 30 years of war, when Eritreans put phar-

maceutical and other factories in caves to escape bombings, built roads without heavy equipment and rebuilt and maintained hundreds of captured tanks, trucks and other vehicles in hidden depots.

"We feel we're the strength of the country — in terms of human resources, in professional and production capabilities — is in industry," Afewerki said.

Italy, which ruled Eritrea as a colony for 51 years, left 144 factories behind when it finally left in 1947.

All had fallen into disuse by the time Eritrean rebels captured Asmara. Three already are back in production and there are plans to restore dozens more.

Still, Afewerki is cautious about the future, perhaps damped by the task of rebuilding while coping with a 1991 crop failure, resettling 330,000 internal and external refugees and caring for 50,000 orphans.

"The people are very ambitious," he said, "but there is a bit of exaggeration in terms of what they feel they can do."

Nevertheless, a confident spirit prevails in a country of 3.5 million people that defeated the army of a nation more than 15 times its size.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:30 The Movie: Sous le signe de Jacques-Yves Cousteau
19:00 News in French
19:15 Weekly Sports Magazine
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Land of Hope and Gloria
21:10 Capital City
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Bible

PRAYER TIMES
05:01 Fajr
06:20 (Sunrise) Duha
11:50 Dhuhr
14:53 Asr
17:28 Maghrib
18:36 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifethel
Tel: 610740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.
637785
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation, Tel.
637440
De la Sade Church, Tel. 661757
Ternum Church, Tel. 623466

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel.
628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Assunta International Church Tel.
685726
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
811205
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654922
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of
Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy to cloudy and
scattered showers of rain are expected.
Winds will be southeasterly moderate,
becoming at times southwesterly mod-
erate. In Amqah, winds will be southerly
fresh and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5 / 10
Dahab 10 / 19
Dahab 4 / 15
Jordan Valley 12 / 18
Yesterday's high temperatures: Am-

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

man 18, Amqah 18. Humidity readings:
Amman 45 per cent, Amqah 35 per
cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Nahawi 63925
Dr. Khalid abdo 795392
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayeen 620115
Dr. Anand Al Ashhab 625207
First pharmacy 782334
Ferdous pharmacy 619122
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairouth pharmacy 636772
Al Selam pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 671676

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Intermediate
Rescue 63041
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 611121
Jordan Television 773111

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hassan Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaleel Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Abdullah Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mahas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 6641714
Hassan, Al-Madajeen 771013
University Hospital 645845
Al-Mansour Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdull 6612737
Al-Ahli, Abdull 6641646
Hassan, Al-Madajeen 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Aray, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 6624050
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal
Jordanian (RJ) information depart-
ment at the Queen Alia International
Airport Tel. (06)5320-5, where it
should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:00 Samra (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Montreal New York (RJ)
11:40 Istanbul (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:00 Cairo (RJ)
13:00 Yerevan (RJ)
14:30 Moscow (RJ)
20:40 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15 Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:00 Beirut (ME)
13:05 Cairo (ME)
14:15 Paris (AF)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple (red) 700 / 700
Apple (yellow) 300 / 300
Banana 300 / 300
Banana (Mekummar) 300 / 450
Banana 300 / 450
Cabbage 700 / 600
Carrot 180 / 120
Cauliflower 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 220 / 160
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 250
Eggplant 230 / 200
Garlic 650 / 550
Grapefruit 650 / 550
Lemon 180 / 120
Mango (large) 300 / 250
Mango (small) 300 / 250
Onion (dry) 300 / 400
Onion (green) 200 / 150
Orange 220 / 170
Pepper (hot) 420 / 250
Pepper (sweet) 1000 / 800
Potato 600 / 400
Radish 300 / 250
Sage 140 / 90
Spinach 600 / 500
Tomato 280 / 120

كنا من الجاهل

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Lithuania

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis to congratulate him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on Lithuania's independence day. King Hussein voiced hope that friendship and cooperation will mark relations between Jordan and Lithuania. The King wished Mr. Landsbergis good luck in serving his country and the Lithuanian people further progress and prosperity.

Ex-Soviet republics recognised

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal decree has been issued endorsing the Cabinet's decision recognising the Russian republic and exchanging diplomatic representation at the ambassador's level. The decree also recognised the independence of the republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Georgia.

Parliament discusses members' questions

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday held a meeting under its Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, and discussed a number of items on the session's agenda, including the government's reply to a question put forward by Lower House member Ahmad Oweidi Al Abbadi and Minister of Health's reply to a query made by member Mansour Murad. Dr. Abbadi's question dealt with technical assistance for the private sector carried out under the U.S.-financed Petra Project. Under the project, Jordan was given a grant of \$12 million, of which \$6.5 million was spent as of the end of 1991. Dr. Abbadi said he was not convinced of the government's reply and reserved the right to raise the issue during the House's forthcoming session. Mr. Murad's query touched upon degrees obtained by Jordanians from universities abroad. Mr. Murad called on the government to speed action on recognising the degrees awarded to Jordanian doctors. The minister of health's reply said that the medical board has been working on the assessment of the degrees in question, and that it has already recognised some of these degrees in accordance with the criteria and bases followed by the board. The House also debated the Legal Committee's decision on copyrights. The committee's chairman, Mohammad Abu Fares, called for adopting the draft law on copyrights, saying that Jordan has ratified many inter-Arab agreements. He also noted that the law is set to encourage cultural exchange between Arab countries. The House's session was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thounan Al Hindawi, Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Subeimat and a number of Cabinet ministers.

Arabiyat receives youth group

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat Sunday received in his office a delegation representing Arab students and youth organisations and associations. Dr. Arabiyat said that Jordan's unique democratic march had won it strength and respect among world nations and provided everybody with the strength and ability to build and work freely and honourably. Dr. Arabiyat said the Arab Nation is the only nation in the world that enjoys a host of common characteristics such as the language, habits, traditions, faith and heritage. He called on the Arab youth to unify their word, spell out their goals and plans and communicate it to the whole world. Delegation members stressed the importance of cooperation among Arab youth as a prelude to achieving the long-sought Arab unity. They also voiced their happiness and appreciation of the democratic march Jordan has charted for itself. The meeting was attended by Lower House member Mansour Murad and Secretary General of the General Federation of Arab Students Rafiq Al Arida.

Weather damage assessment begins

AMMAN (J.T.) — Task forces formed in the aftermath of the snowstorms that hit the country over the last couple of weeks to assess the damage caused to property and agriculture Sunday started their missions in the various parts of Jordan. "In Tafleeh Governorate, task forces entrusted with assessing the damage Sunday started their physical inspection missions in various parts of the governorate in preparation for submitting reports containing financial estimates to the district governor, who will pass such information to the authorities concerned to compensate farmers for the losses they sustained and to provide the necessary loans to rehabilitate them and enable them to carry out new projects. In North Shuneh District, special task forces have been visiting the areas hit by the frost or flooded with water during the last couple of weeks. North Shuneh District Governor Saleh Obeidat called on the heads of local councils to cooperate with the committees and provide the necessary facilities for them. Mr. Obeidat pointed out that other teams from the Ministry of Social Development will be inspecting houses damaged as a result of the severe weather conditions in preparation for providing the necessary assistance to owners of these houses. In Ramtha, special teams embarked on assessing the damage caused to crops as a result of the heavy rainfall and snow. Also, in Kurat district teams began their field inspection tours to assess the damage caused to the property of the municipal and village councils and residential areas. Teams from the Ministry of Agriculture also embarked on assessing the damage caused to crops and livestock as a result of the latest snowstorm, which hit the country early this month.

New courthouse opened in Naour district

NAOUR (Petra) — The citizens of Naour District, estimated at 25,000 people, now have their own Peace Court and do not have to go to Amman to settle their disputes at the capital's court.

The new court building was inaugurated Sunday at a ceremony attended by Justice Minister Yousef Mbaideen who said that the government has sought to save time and effort for the local citizens and responded favourably to their requests and those of their representatives in Parliament by opening the court.

At Al Shahwan, a Parliament member from the Naour area, thanked the government for its response, noting that the court would obviously facilitate judicial procedures and save local citizens a great deal of time, effort and expenses.

Naour Mayor Khalaf Al Hamid voiced citizens' appreciation of the government move, requesting the minister to convey the people's renewed loyalty to His Majesty King Hussein and a word of gratitude to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. The minister called the prime minister



Yousef Mbaideen

by telephone to convey the message.

At the outset of his tour of Naour, the minister called at the governor's house and discussed the work of the new court in the district. He also listened to a briefing on the consequences of the recent snowstorm on the Naour District.

Several local and Ministry of Justice officials attended the inauguration ceremony. The new court has one judge and a public prosecutor as well as lower-level court officials.

Officials continue to explore solutions to Kingdom's growing unemployment problem

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Ministers Saturday heard a briefing about the unemployment situation in the Kingdom and scheduled another session this week to continue discussion with the purpose of working out a definite strategy to deal with the issue.

A statement following the meeting said that unemployment constituted a negative manifestation resulting from the economic crisis facing the Kingdom, but one which requires immediate attention.

Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti presented his ministry's general policy and its plans to deal with the unemployment question. He presented statistical data and figures included in a working paper related to the unemployment problem, noting that the ministry was handling the issue through the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

The minister said that the VTC centres were helping to provide training for the purpose of meeting the needs of the local labour market.

The paper covered such questions as non-Jordanian workers employed in the Kingdom and the matter of linking education and training at the various educational levels with the needs of the local and Arab labour markets. The paper gave details about the number of non-Jordanian workers and their concentrations in Jordan.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, in a speech delivered at Muta University near Karak Saturday, urged graduates of universities, community colleges and other educational institutions to accept work regardless of their specialisations since work contributes towards the country's development.

The Prince noted that the Kingdom was in need of a new momentum of high morale and efficient management in view of the extraordinary circumstances it is facing and the socio-economic and political climate in the region following the forced migration of hundreds of thousands of expatriates who came to settle in the Kingdom.

Crown Prince Hassan predicted that by the year 2010 the country's population would reach six million, noting that increased population has and will immensely increase Jordan's burdens and strain the country's water and energy resources to the limit.

Prince Hassan discussed matters of concern to the graduates and the Jordan youth in general, laying stress on the importance of investment in quality education, which can pave the ground for creativity and development.

Al Ribat banned again, views conflict on reasons

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — This week's issue of the Muslim Brotherhood's weekly Al Ribat was banned from distribution in Jordan, the third time in four months. The publishers say the weekly was banned for criticising "some Arab leaders' repression of the Islamic movements in their respective countries and for criticising the Middle East peace process," but officials at the Press and Publications Department said they banned the issue because it "slandered some Arab leaders."

In a statement released by the chief editor of the weekly, Kamal Rasheed, issue No. 53 was banned in Jordan because "the paper talked about some Arab countries that practise repression and terrorism against the Islamic movements there and because of subjects dealing with (the Brotherhood's) rejection of the peace negotiations."

An official, who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times that Al Ribat had violated an article in the 1973 Press and Publications Law which prohibits the slandering of Arab leaders. According to the law, Al Ribat, which is not licensed nor published in Jordan, has first to pass censorship by the department before being distributed in the country.

He added that this week's issue of Al Ribat contained slanderous material concerning Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. He said that the article on Mr. Arafat was "offensive gossip."

"It's true that there was criticism of Arafat and an article on Saudi Arabia," Al Ribat's editor Kamal Rasheed told the Jordan Times. However, he would not elaborate on what exactly was written about the two Arab leaders. "But there are ten other subjects that the press officials objected to," he contended.

Mr. Rasheed insisted that the Press Department had red ink placed on 10 different items in the weekly, including the editorial which he said criticised "some Arab governments, without mentioning names, and their positions regarding the Islamists." He added that criticism against the Tunisian government's "repression" of the Islamists was also rejected by the department.

"In a nutshell, they (the censors) don't want us to talk about the Arab countries with which Jordan wants to improve relations, nor to write about our rejection of the peace settlement of the Middle East crisis," Mr. Rasheed said in the telephone interview. "We were bluntly told to refrain

from continuing to voice our rejection to the peace talks," he claimed.

The Muslim Brotherhood publicly rejects peace negotiations with Israel and the land for peace formula. They advocate jihad (holy war) against the Jews to liberate all of Palestine "from the river to the sea."

This is the third issue in four months banned from distribution in the Kingdom. Mr. Rasheed said that the other issues were prohibited because of "our rejection of the peace talks and criticism of some Arab regimes." The Press Department had found the articles in these issues as "inciting trouble," he said.

"We don't criticise Jordan except within the context of the peace talks," he commented.

Mr. Rasheed said that he told the press officials he was ready to cut out the parts that were found "offensive," but that the concerned department had rejected his offer.

Mr. Rasheed accused the press authorities of "double standards" in their dealing with his newspaper, saying that other newspapers — published inside and outside Jordan — had been writing more critical articles about the same issues and that they were neither banned nor censored.

"This is something that troubles us," he said.

Society seeks greater role in protecting environment

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution is drawing up a plan designed to build bridges of co-operation and strong ties with the concerned ministries and public organisations to ensure an increased public role in the protection of the Jordanian environment.

The announcement was made by the society President Ahmad Obeidat at the outset of a workshop organised in cooperation with the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

"It is important for the government to pass a political decision regarding the environment to back the society's efforts," said Mr. Obeidat in a speech to the meeting, which was attended by 20 liaison officers employed by the society in various governorates.

Mr. Obeidat called on Parliament to discuss the formation of special committees to be entrusted with safeguarding the environment and ensuring further public participation in matters related to its protection. Dealing with environmental challenges and the dangers of pollution requires efforts on all sides and from all sectors, said Mr. Obeidat.

The German foundation's representative at the meeting, Walter Rudel, noted in a speech that pollution is not only affecting water, air and soil surrounding humans, but also the upper layers of the atmosphere are being polluted and damaged. He said nearly six billion tonnes of pollutant gases, sulphur and dust are affecting the earth's atmosphere, causing what is called smog and acid rain which result in the depletion of the ozone.

The earth's drinking water is endangered by heavy pollutants through the presence of chemicals and the effects of factory waste, pesticides, and other harmful substances which are causing the loss of up to seven million hectares of arable soil every year, he said.

The workshop was addressed by Dr. Saleh Al Sharee, director of Department of the Environment, who reviewed the various sources of pollution in Jordan. Pollution, he said, takes the form of random building operations, excessive drain of natural resources, extensive use of pesticides and insecticides, damage to forests and pasture land, factory waste and others.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of oil and water colour paintings by Tete Wegelins, Lucy Marto, Hada Bitar and Jennifer Bowker at Alfa Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Spanish artist Sued Esheri at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Shaker Hassan Al Said at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)
- ★ Exhibition of photographs on Goethe-Forest, between Tafleeh and Shobak, at the Jordan University for Women.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "The Uprising in Cartoons" at the Royal Cultural Centre.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Who's There?" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 7 p.m.

FILMS

- ★ Italian film entitled "A ciascuno il suo," shown as part of Italian Film Week at the Royal Cultural Centre — 7:30 p.m.
- ★ French film entitled "L'ami de mon amie" at the French Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.
- ★ Spanish film entitled "Moros and Christians" at the Spanish Cultural Centre — 10:30 a.m.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, on plastic art movement in Jordan by Abdul Raouf Sham'oun and Ghassan Mafadla at the Phoenix Art and Cultural Gallery — 6 p.m.

MEETING

- ★ The annual meeting of the Friends of Archaeology at the Goethe Institute — 7 p.m.

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NAF to expand its role in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Aid Fund (NAF), which has an annual budget of nearly JD 9 million, is planning to expand its services and assistance programmes to the less fortunate sectors of society through encouraging income-generation projects by individuals and families.

NAF Director General Farouk Badran Sunday said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the plan aims at enabling the needy heads of families to earn their own means of living.

At the same time, the NAF plans to offer rehabilitation ser-

vices to handicapped people, providing them with training and artificial limbs to enable them to become self-reliant, Mr. Badran noted.

He said that the NAF plans to spread out to remote regions of the Kingdom after conducting a survey to identify those sectors in need of help.

This year, the NAF plans to increase to more than 21,000 the number of families receiving direct aid from the NAF. Mr. Badran noted. He said that the increase accounts for 20 per cent over the present figures which run at more than 17,500 families.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975

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Hysteria of arms

THE PHENOMENAL volume of arms trade with the Middle East sheds more light on the Gulf crisis that climaxed in a devastating war last year. Recent figures released by the U.S. Arms Control Association speak of U.S. shipment of arms to some Middle Eastern countries, since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, in the range of \$19 billion. Saudi Arabia alone was sold traditional weapons worth nearly \$15 billion since the eruption of the Gulf crisis. Such huge arms sales to the Gulf region may suggest that at least part of the well-orchestrated campaign against the Iraqi regime was to sell billions of dollars worth of armaments to the Gulf Arab countries that participated in the "Desert Storm" hysteria following Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait in August of 1990. What is most disheartening about this trade in weaponry is the fact that it has been taking place at a time when U.S. President George Bush has called, since May, for restraint in weapons sales to the Middle East.

The figures documented by the Arms Control Association (ACA) on arms trade between the U.S. alone and the Gulf states make a mockery of the pious declaration that the Middle East region should become demilitarised. Outside the Arab Gulf region, Israel remained the biggest importer of U.S. weapons, having imported more than \$6 billion worth of a variety of such advanced weapons between 1985 and 1989. Such arms sales to the region obviously make the U.S. the biggest salesman of death to the area. Since 1989, ACA reports, U.S. arms exports to developing countries have soared by 138 per cent replacing in the process the former Soviet Union as the number one exporter of weapons to the region.

What is alarming about such commerce in arms is the fact that it is taking place at a time when most of the countries of the region are either debt or poverty stricken. Maybe the economies of the exporters of weapons to the developing countries can profit from this type of negative and destructive trade and get a respite for their weakening economies. The socio-economic conditions in these poor countries are bound to suffer since they invariably end up footing the bill for this highly manipulated and fabricated scheme to siphon off badly needed money to replenish the economies of the major suppliers.

It is shocking that this part of the world continues to be the world's biggest importer of weapons, amounting to no less than 30 per cent of the entire world's arms market. Not that most of the states of the region do have legitimate defensive needs. As long as Israel occupies Arab territories and continues to threaten its neighbours, the Arab side will naturally be forced to seek means for defending themselves. When and if Washington succeeds in its efforts to settle the entire Arab-Israeli conflict, then and only then can all sides begin to turn their swords into ploughshares. Meanwhile, more sincere efforts must be exerted to stop those campaigns aimed at creating tension in the area for no purpose other than providing a justification for the vendors of arms to sell their deadly products.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday drew a contrast between Washington's stand with regard to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land, that has lasted since 1967. The paper said that the United States, backed by the Western alliance, first arranged for U.N. Security Council resolutions to be passed condemning Iraq, demanding its withdrawal from the occupied emirate and later launching aggression on the Iraqi people who continue to suffer from the sanctions imposed on them despite the implementation of the council resolutions. It said that these Arab states which called for a peaceful solution to the Kuwaiti issue through negotiations and dialogue were considered enemies of the West and the United States which continued to impose an embargo on them taking vengeance for their ill-support of the Western aggression on Iraq. Following the Gulf war, the United States announced that it wanted to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, but so far nothing has happened although Israel has been occupying Arab lands for a quarter of a century, the daily pointed out. It said that the United States failed to have started a peace process in the Middle East but claimed to take a firm stand with regard to Israel's stand and failed to openly announce its condemnation of Israel's occupation of Arab territory. The paper said it is not late for the Americans to prove their good intentions about the peace process and its ends, and the coming negotiations in Washington offer a good chance for them to do so.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily focused attention on the problems facing the Jordanian farmers and the need for the government to take action to solve them. The government is to be commended for its latest decisions offering compensation to the farmers in addition to long-term interest-free loans to enable the farmers to resume their activities, said Ahmad Thibani. Furthermore, the government's decision to embark on studies to create an agricultural insurance fund is also to be considered as a very wise step in the right direction, the writer said. He said that the farmers have faced drought and poor crop production, floods and fluctuation of prices or improper marketing of products of some time or another. These farmers from the backbone of the national economy and they require immediate assistance, said the writer. The temporary arrangements made by the government to come to the help of the farmers, and its decision to build more dams in order to collect more rain water for irrigation purposes, the writer said, are all constructive steps. But he said, the government should turn its attention to a very serious problem facing the farmers, which is that of the debts that have been accumulating over the years. He said that drastic measures should be taken immediately in this regard so as not to keep the farmers in a state of despair that could lead to abandoning their trade and a serious shortage of food production in the country.

Weekly Political Pulse

End the deadlock over state security courts

The new law on the establishment of the proposed State Security Court appears to be in a state of limbo because of differences between the executive and legislative branches of the government. The government of former Prime Minister Taher Masri had introduced an innovative piece of legislation on the subject but Parliament rebuffed him even though his cabinet's draft legislation on the subject had been submitted with a remarkable and unprecedented incorporation of the right to appeal to the Supreme Court of the land any verdict reached by the proposed State Security Court. Not only that, but the suggested law provided that the Supreme Court of the country would review not only issues of law but also issues of fact and evidence related issues. This was indeed a far-reaching amendment to the existing legislation on State Security Court systems and meets the requirements of various international conventions and treaties that make the right of appeal a must in any adjudication. What the former cabinet and Parliament differed over was the composition of any such state security courts, with Parliament insisting that the tribunal be constituted of civilian judges while the government insisted on providing for equal opportunities for both civilian and military judges to sit on the bench. And due to this differences in perspective, the new law remained unadopted till this date to the detriment of the Kingdom.

One wonders why and how so many parliamentarians insisted on a strictly civilian State Security Court at a time when the stakes were so high as to defeat in the end the substantive point of

making judgements of state security courts appealable to a five-member Supreme Court. How can such parliamentarians be so reckless as to frustrate all efforts to make State Security Court decisions appealable over the issue of whether the Cabinet may or may not appoint military judges to adjudicate certain category of cases such as treason and espionage. As long as all verdicts are kept subject to the scrutiny of a higher tribunal on all relevant issues, including factual ones, one can have little sympathy for those factions who are willing to sacrifice substance for form.

Perhaps what pains the forces opposed to the submissions of the executive branch of government at this point is the presumption that military judges are always subject to the whims and dictates of their superiors. For starters, such a presumption may or may not be true, depending on the personality and moral calibre of the military judges. But even assuming the worst, how and why can civilian judges be presumed to be free of any form of pressure, prejudice or coercion at all times? In all fairness, one category of tribunals can be just as prejudiced as the other, especially when the appointment of civilian judges is just as controllable as the designation of military ones.

There is every reason, therefore, to reactivate the dialogue between the two branches of government at this point with a view to arriving at a sensible solution. The country needs this new legislation and no effort must be spared in order to have it in our law books as soon as possible. In any case, one would guess that the greater majority of Jordanians would rather like to end the

existing legal hiatus on this issue by supporting the suggested compromise.

So there is an urgent call for compromise and since the government has gone a long way to amend its emergency legislation, parliamentarians are called upon to reciprocate this belated initiative and accept to strike a compromise. Otherwise, the entire exercise to root out martial and emergency laws from the law book of the country would be needlessly put in jeopardy. As Jordanians and non-Jordanians have received the news that martial and emergency systems are being phased out with much rejoice and hope, that process must not be derailed now, so late in the hour, over issues that most probably would not make much difference in the end.

Meanwhile, the executive branch must not leave matters where they have reached. If necessary, the whole subject matter must be further explained to the people with a view to soliciting their support for the proposed compromise. After all parliamentarians are supposed to heed the opinions of their constituencies and the more active the central governments profile is on this issue, the more the public can be expected to intervene in favour of common sense and moderation. In this vein, airing out the views of academicians, scholars, jurists and statesmen in public is a must in order to elucidate and articulate better the position of the country on the subject. But to leave the proposed new legislations in a limbo is not exactly what Jordanians were counting on.

Arab-American political involvement steadily increasing

By Rosalind Mandine

WASHINGTON — Arab-American political involvement in presidential elections has progressed steadily over the years. There was a time when presidential campaigns spurned Arab-American endorsements, Jim Zogby, director of the Arab American Institute, recalls. Today, Arab Americans hold top positions in the Republican and Democratic parties.

In an interview with USA, Mr. Zogby pointed out that in 1972 the George McGovern presidential campaign actually returned the endorsement of a small Arab-American political group, and in 1980 Jimmy Carter's campaign organised on Arab-American committee that lasted only three days because of political pressure.

By 1984, however, the political picture for Arab-Americans changed for the better, due to hard work and improved organisation by the community and a growing sense of acceptance by the American political party apparatus.

In the 1984 presidential elections, Jesse Jackson and Presi-

dent Ronald Reagan organised Arab-American committees in their campaigns. Mr. Zogby served as Mr. Jackson's deputy campaign manager, the first Arab-American to hold such a high position in a presidential campaign. Soon afterwards, Mr. Zogby helped to establish the Arab American Institute with the goal of increasing Arab-American political involvement.

Since then, Arab-Americans have been elected to local and national offices in increasing greater numbers and have attained party leadership roles in both the Republican and Democratic parties. Mr. Zogby noted. Arab-Americans are delegates to national political conventions and running platform committees for several state political parties, Mr. Zogby said. The platform committee helps to shape the policy of state Democratic and Republican parties.

Currently, more than 100 Arab-Americans occupy local elected offices, 32 Arab-Americans are mayors and there are three Arab-Americans in the U.S. Congress, Mr. Zogby pointed out. Those numbers may increase in the 1992 elections, he said, with an estimated 37 Arab-

American candidates running for local and national offices.

The goal for 1992 is to "solidify" the gains made by the community," Mr. Zogby said.

"Currently, more than 100 Arab-Americans occupy local elected offices, 32 Arab-Americans are mayors and there are three Arab-Americans in the U.S. Congress."

The Arab-American Institute's strategy, called "Challenge '92," is "to increase Arab-Americans directly involved in the presidential campaign, to increase Arab-American voter registration, and to get

Arab-American issue concerns — domestic and foreign — directly into the political process," Mr. Zogby explained.

On the presidential campaign, Mr. Zogby said, the institute encourages Arab-Americans to run as delegates to the party conventions. "We want them there at the convention — the best school available to learn how the political process works," he said.

"We want them to win and to be empowered, because empowerment is what it is all about," he added.

One necessary ingredient for empowerment is voting, Mr. Zogby stressed. "If you don't vote, you can't play. If you can't play, you don't get a say... So it is really important to get them through the process," he said.

The institute has seven field staff members in cities with large Arab-American communities who are going door-to-door and sending out thousands of mailings in order to increase voter registration, Mr. Zogby said.

Mr. Zogby underscored the importance of registering to vote by telling the story of one recent Middle Eastern immigrant in the state of California who expanded

her political involvement from registering to vote to participating in a political caucus to eventually rising to the executive board of the state's Democratic Party.

Domestic and foreign policy concerns for Arab-Americans will go hand-in-hand during this election, Mr. Zogby said.

Stressing that the U.S.-Arab relationship must be protected and developed for political as well as economic reasons, Mr. Zogby said this "is an issue that we will take to voters this year."

The issue will be discussed not only in the context of the peace process but also in the context of creating jobs — a vital concern for most Americans, Mr. Zogby said.

"You want to talk jobs? Let's talk about increased trade. You want to talk jobs? Let's talk about having a normal political and economic relationship with the Arab World," he said.

Mr. Zogby said that Arab-Americans may employ a different strategy to bring the peace process into the debate at the national party conventions this time around.

In the 1988 elections, Arab-Americans fought to get the issue

of a Palestinian homeland on the Democratic Party platform. They survived a lively debate and succeeded in getting the issue on the platform. This year the community is looking to building a bipartisan, national consensus on the peace process, Mr. Zogby said.

"We would like to see bipartisan support for the peace process and for the principles enunciated by the president — land for peace, Palestinian rights and Israeli security. If the principles of the peace process can be endorsed by both parties (Republican and Democrat), we would prefer to see no challenge, no debate," he explained.

Mr. Zogby noted that recent AAI studies and polls conclude that "most Americans support the peace process." This attitude and a growing relationship with the American Jewish community have contributed to opening up the process of Arab-American political involvement, he said.

"We're very optimistic right now about the prospects of our empowerment, the prospects of our developing this debate and of our being viewed as a central participant in the debate," Mr. Zogby said.

Jordanians score low in international assessment test

By Khadija Al Muhaisen

An international assessment test for mathematics and science was conducted in 1991. The assessment attempted to rate the mathematics and science skills of 9-and-13-year old students from Brazil, Canada, China, England, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Korea, Mozambique, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, the former Soviet Union, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the U.S.

The International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP) was conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The ETS is a nonprofit-making organisation, headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey. It administers more than seven million exams a year in the U.S. and 170 other countries. Among those exams are the well-known

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for the College Board, as well as the TOEFL for foreign students. The funding for this International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP) came from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. Department of Education's National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Carnegie Corporation.

The test in Jordan was carried out by choosing random samples of students from schools all over the Kingdom. Jordan only participated in the 13 years age-group. The visits to the schools were unannounced. The tests were wrapped in sealed bags and opened one hour before the exam.

At the mathematics test, China scored highest for the 13-year age-group. Next came Korea. Jordan was below the

IAEP average, scoring 40 per cent while the average was 58 per cent. The lowest ten per cent of Switzerland and China scored almost as well as Jordan's average!

It was found that the percentage of students who spent four hours or more on their maths homework each week, in Jordan, was 14 per cent, whereas it was 37 per cent and 33 per cent for China and Korea respectively.

The percentage of students who had less than 25 books at home in Jordan was 51 per cent; in China and Korea it was 26 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. The percentage of students who spent two hours or more on all homework everyday was 56 per cent in Jordan. In China, by comparison it was 44 per cent, Korea 41 per cent.

It was found that leisure reading, time invested in

homework and time spent watching television were directly related to mathematics achievement in many of the participating countries.

In the science test, on the other hand, Korea scored the highest for the 13 year age-group. Jordan again, scored below the IAEP average for the same age-group, scoring 57 per cent while the average was 67 per cent. The percentage of schools with general or specialised laboratories was 65 per cent for Jordan, 87 per cent for Korea.

The percentage of students who spent two hours or more on all homework everyday was 54 per cent in Jordan and 38 per cent in Korea. It was found that students in Jordan, who were relatively lower performers, have the greatest percentage of students with positive attitudes (82 per cent).

Archie Lapointe, executive director of the Centre for the Assessment of Educational Progress for ETS, visited schools during the survey in many countries. He remarked: "The South Korean students applauded and cheered their classmates as they left homerooms to take the exam. Once the booklets were collected, it wasn't uncommon for students to shake my hand and thank me for giving them an opportunity to take the test. This has never happened to me in an American school!"

In their press release on February 5, the ETS found that the assessment conducted "found no clear relation between educational results and many of the approaches advocated for school reform."

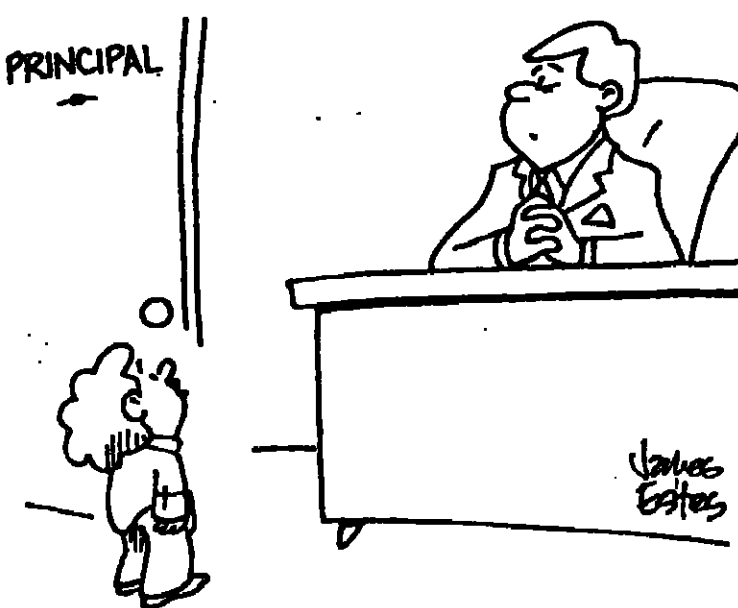
The ETS has tried to examine the results and give a reasonable explanation for their outcome. It was found that money alone was not the decisive factor in education.

"The U.S. spends 7.5 per cent of its gross national product on education, the second highest percentage, yet scored close to the bottom in three of the four assessments for age-groups (for science and math)."

Hungary ranked in the top half of both age groups in each subject despite having among the lowest average number of school days (177).

The results of Jordan in this assessment are quite unfortunate. One, though, should not simply give in. The causes that lead to such a low performance — whether the money devoted to education, the number of school days, the curricula in our schools, or the teachers and students themselves — these causes and variables have to be thoroughly investigated and studied. One always hopes for the better!

The writer is studying English literature and business at the University of Jordan.



LETTERS

Pass the salt, please!

To the Editor:

Since the unusually cruel winter and snow falls started on Jan. 1, Jordan has been almost totally paralysed; schools, universities and offices, were closed, people went into total hibernation in their homes; Jordan resembled a ghost place.

While we thank and praise the efforts of all the responsible authorities for all they are doing to normalise life in Jordan, it is high time that we derive lessons from these experiences and learn to cope and live in every possible circumstance. For example, the use of salt to clear the streets must be on the priority list, it could help over three million people go about their normal chores. Salt is an inexpensive commodity, readily available in Jordan, whether in Azrak, the Dead Sea or Aqaba. Some people might argue that salt is damaging to cars, but so is ice and it is worth using the salt if it means the country can continue functioning.

Then, of course, cleaning the mess off the streets may be a problem in terms of manpower and machinery. This too can be solved. How about hiring some of the so many unemployed? It could give them some income in addition to serving society.

Nur Sati,
P.O. Box 5139,
Amman, Jordan.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Income distribution and poverty in Jordan: a change in pattern

By Dr. Atheel Al Jomard

Only few studies have attempted to measure the relative distribution of income in Jordan and speculate on its pattern. Probably a well-known study in that respect is the one by Professor J. Dajani whose results were published in the Jordan Times on August 31, 1986.

By using data on family expenditure from a comprehensive study conducted by the Royal Scientific Society in 1973, Professor Dajani found that the Gini index, an index used to measure relative income inequality, had the value in Jordan, of 0.38. This value is considered comparatively high, indicating high inequality in the distribution of income in Jordan. By comparing his figures with those of a partial study on family expenditure, conducted by

the Institute of Vocational Training in 1981, which was confined to the Amman-Zarka region, Professor Dajani concluded that 40 per cent of the population did not experience real improvement in their standard of living, as the realised 5.3 per cent in their income did not cover the increase in the cost of living in that period. He, therefore, stated that the real growth of income belonged to 60 per cent of the population.

It does seem, however, that the data of the 1973 study is rather outdated now, and the fact that the study conducted in 1981 was incomplete makes the results derived from the comparison of its data with that of the 1973 study rather unreliable. Due to the lack of information, therefore, Professor Dajani was unable to assess whether a change in the relative distribution of income has taken

place.

However, since that time, two comprehensive studies on the family expenditure and income were reliably conducted in Jordan and the detailed results were published. In my research on this subject I have used three indexes of income inequality (Gini Index, Kuznets Index, Thiel Index). All those indexes indicated a reduction in inequality during the period 1980-1987. It was found that the value of the Gini Index, for the distribution of expenditure in the country as a whole, decreased from 0.403 in 1980 to 0.275 in 1987, while those of Kuznets and Thiel decreased from 0.314 and 0.288 to 0.22 and 0.19 respectively. The reduction of inequality was experienced in the rural as well as the urban areas, as indicated in Table 1.

The study of the relative dis-

tribution of income in the governorates of Jordan indicated a similar pattern. Income inequality decreased in each of the governorates. In the region of Amman, for example, where the inequality is comparatively high, the value of Gini index decreased from 0.46 in 1980, to 0.39 in 1987. In the region of Ma'an, where inequality is comparatively low, the value of Gini index decreased from 0.36 in 1980, to 0.25 in 1987. It has also been realised that by using the constant prices of 1980, 20 per cent of the low-income population experienced a real increase in their income of 120 per cent, while 20 per cent of the high-income population experienced a real increase of 20 per cent only.

These results are shown in Table 2. Again this pattern was the same in each of the governorates.

During the 1980's, and to be precise, the first half of it, the real growth rate of the gross domestic product for the period 1980-1985 was 4.2 per cent, compared to the planned real growth rate of this period as indicated in the second five-year plan which was 11.1 per cent. Also, the real growth rate of investment was 0.8 per cent com-

pared to the planned growth rate of 12.2 per cent. Exports and imports grew by 2.9 per cent and 3.4 per cent compared to the planned rates of 13.7 per cent and 21.7 per cent respectively.

The failure to achieve growth rates close to the planned ones was accompanied by a clear success in securing a remarkable

reduction in the inequality in the distribution of income and reducing poverty, which was one of the targets that the economic planners of Jordan had set for themselves in the last three-five-year plans.

The above is an extract from a lecture delivered at the Abdul Hameed Shuman Foundation on November 27, 1991. The writer is a professor at the Mosul University, in northern Iraq.

Table 2
Real growth of average annual family income for various income groups in the country as a whole (at the constant prices of 1980)

Income Groups	Average Family Income in Dinars 1980	Average Family Income in Dinars 1987	Real Growth Rate
Lowest 20 per cent	426	938	13.2
2nd 20 per cent	1110	1473	4.7
3rd 20 per cent	1515	2045	5.0
4th 20 per cent	2379	2918	3.4
Upper 20 per cent	5587	6726	3.1
Country as a whole	2206	2524	4.1

Source: 1. Family Expenditure Study of 1980,
2. Family Expenditure and Income Study 1986-1987.

Turkish nationalists warn of civil war with Kurds

By Ayse Sarioglu
Reuters

ANKARA — Rightwingers demanding harsh measures to crush Kurdish nationalism have warned the Turkish government that soft-peddling will lead to civil war. "If measures are not taken or are delayed, and if a chain of concessions continues, a bloody civil war in Turkey will become unavoidable," said a report by the Turkish Hearths, a group set up early this century to nurture Turkish nationalism.

The report, leaked to the media this week, was submitted to President Turgut Ozal and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel in November after two newly-elected Kurdish deputies caused an uproar in Parliament for voicing nationalist sentiments on behalf of Turkey's 10 million ethnic Kurds.

Mr. Ozal, blamed by rightwingers for legalising the use of spoken Kurdish last year, has urged tougher action against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), fighting an eight-year guerrilla war for an independent state in the southeast.

Referring to rising anger against the PKK, Mr. Ozal said this month: "We are receiving information that in certain places in Anatolia, associations to defend Turkey are being established."

In other signs of emotions on the boil, policemen shouting "blood for blood" and "down with the PKK" staged unruly marches in two cities after a left-wing group thought to be allied with the PKK killed four police and a top security prosecutor.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Six people said to support the PKK were killed separately in the turbulent southeast during the last few weeks.

Mehmet Demir, an official of the Kurdish-based People's Labour Party (HEP), is still missing after his disappearance in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir last month. His relatives accused security forces of kidnapping him. They denied it.

Similar events last year, includ-

ing the unsolved abduction, torture and murder of HEP official Vedat Aydin, drew charges from the left that right-wing death squads were to blame.

More than 3,300 people have been killed since the Marxist PKK, based in Lebanon's Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, launched its armed struggle in August 1984.

The highly-charged debate over Kurdish aspirations, whether for full independence or for greater rights within Turkey, has intensified as Turkish forces prepare to counter what the PKK says will be a spring offensive backed by a popular uprising.

Parliament must debate next month whether to renew a state of emergency existing in 10 mainly Kurdish provinces.

The presence within Mr. Demirel's conservative-Social Democrat coalition government of a score of Kurdish nationalist deputies opposed to any renewal is sure to complicate the issue.

The Turkish Hearths report calls for harsher measures such as martial law, military reinforcements and the carrying out of suspended death sentences to de-

ter PKK violence.

The group's chairman, Orhan Duzgunes, blamed politicians for giving credence to the idea — strongly disputed by the Turkish Hearths — that Kurds are ethnically separate from Turks.

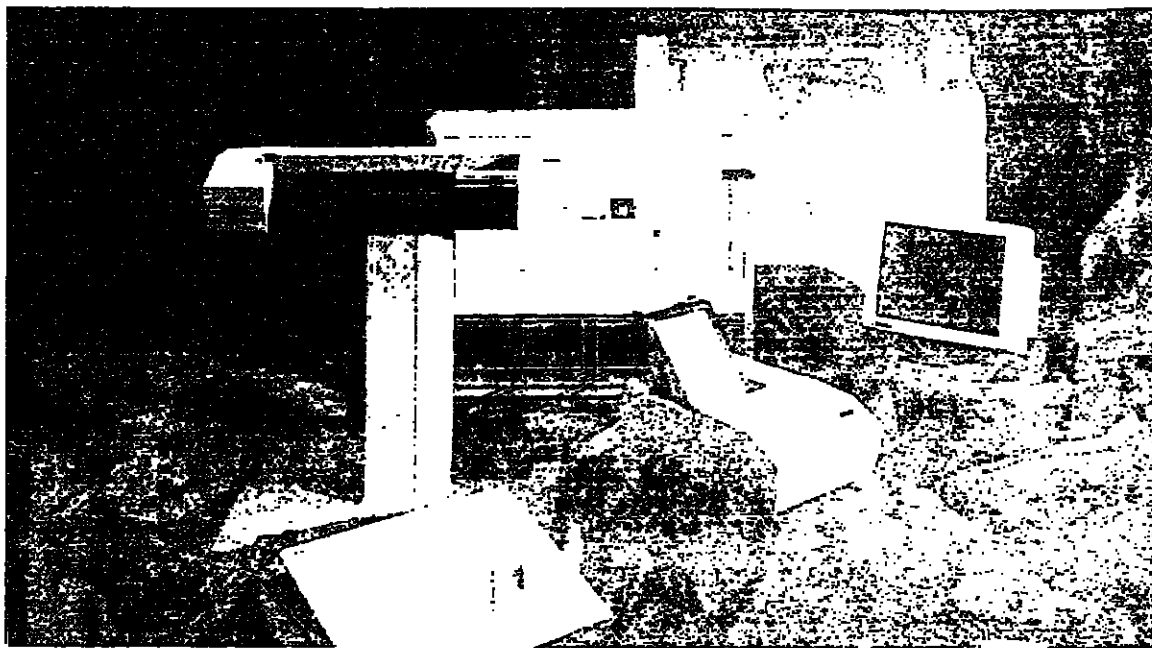
"Kurds are not a minority. They are (Turkish) citizens with equal rights," the report says. A civil war sparked by "racist and separatist propaganda" would lead to Turkey's collapse.

Mr. Duzgunes said there were signs of rising anti-Kurdish sentiment, especially in schools. "We have no information that the reaction has begun to solidify in organised form but our fear is that it may do so," he told Reuters.

Reversing an entrenched policy of denying that Kurds existed in Turkey, Mr. Demirel told crowds in Diyarbakir a month after his government took power: "We recognise the Kurdish reality."

He promised "state compassion" and better living standards for the poverty-stricken Kurdish population mainly in the southeast. He also vowed to wage an uncompromising fight against the PKK.

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6,000 held in Algeria

(Continued from page 1)

country "wishes for the success of efforts to overcome all temporary problems."

Mauritania is the current president of the Arab Maghreb Union, a grouping of North African nations. Last week, Portugal recognised the legitimacy of the new government.

State radio reported Saturday more than 100 arrests and eight deaths in confrontations between fundamentalists and security forces on Friday. Further arrests were carried out Saturday in several Algiers neighbourhoods, but no official figures were available.

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JORDAN MARKETPLACE

Ukrainian hopes Olympic gold medal means financial rewards

ALBERTVILLE, France (AP) — Viktor Petrenko hopes the Olympics figure skating crown will translate into financial security for his family in the Ukraine.

In a feat never accomplished by a skater from the defunct Soviet Union, Petrenko won the gold medal Saturday night with an athletic and difficult free skating routine at the Albertville ice arena. He represented the Unified Team of five former Soviet republics.

Paul Wylie of the United States took the silver medal with a stirring performance on his 4 1/2 minute programme that pushed him ahead of Petr Barna of Czechoslovakia.

Barna, the European champion, landed the first quadruple jump ever seen in the Olympics but he fell once and had other flaws. His marks earned the bronze medal.

Wylie's silver medal kept in intact a streak of American men's medals in figure skating that stretches back 12 years.

While Petrenko was winning the first gold medal in the event for the former Soviet Union — despite falling on one triple jump — Wylie impressed the crowd of 9,000, if not all the judges.

"I feel I did almost the best job that I could have done," Wylie said. "That alone is the most

satisfying thing."

Although Wylie's spins were superior, Petrenko had better footwork. The Ukrainian also did his triple salchow coming out of some footwork. Wylie did not.

Wylie landed all six of his triple jumps and Petrenko hit five.

"I don't believe it, I just don't believe it," said Petrenko, a 22-year-old from Odessa who also won the bronze medal at the 1988 Olympics.

Meanwhile, Norway's Kjetil Andre Aamodt gave the Olympics another Alpine skiing surprise Sunday, while two Swiss bobsledders finally gave their nation a gold medal.

The German skiing-and-shooting team helped keep their newly unified nation atop the medal standings by beating the athletes of what has the Soviet Union for the first time in an Olympic biathlon relay.

Germany collected seven of the 32 gold medals decided so far, and 18 medals in all. The Unified Team and Austria each won 14 medals, with the Unified Team ahead five to four in golds.

Surprising Norway, now with 10 medals in all, gained its fifth gold when Aamodt beat four-time World Cup champion Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg through the tight curves of the

super-giant slalom course. Three of the top four finishers were Norwegian.

Norway's showing in these games is its best since it led the 1968 Grenoble Olympic medal standings with six gold and 14 in all.

The 20-year-old Aamodt, not a high supre-G finisher in World Cup races since his silver in last year's World Championships, won by .73 seconds, a wide margin in an event often decided by hundredths.

Girardelli's silver was his first Olympic medal ever.

Jan Einar Thorsen, who won the downhill portion of the combined event Monday, took the bronze and fellow Norwegian Ole Christian Furuseth was fourth.

Gustav Weder and Donat Acklin, vaulting up from ninth place after the first of four runs over two days, rocketed to the two-man bobsled gold for Switzerland by .29 seconds over Germans Rudi Lochner and Markus Zimmermann.

Another German pair, Christoph Langen and Gunter Eger, took the bronze, .37 behind the winners, on the ice shoot at La Plagne.

The Germans in the men's 4 x 7.5-kilometre biathlon relay beat the Unified Team by 22.8 seconds

in Les Saisies.

Mark Kirchner, who led a 1-2 German finish in the 10k individual race, gained his second gold here. Sweden took the bronze.

In five Alpine ski races so far in these games, the only favourite who was won has been Austria's Petra Kronberger, in the women's combined.

Saturday's surprise winner in the women's downhill, "all or nothing" skier Kerrin Lee-Gartner of Canada, had a premonition, however, of victory.

After outracing the favoured Europeans down the treacherous "Iron rock" women's downhill course Saturday, Lee-Gartner mentioned that in 1990, "I had a dream in French and the guy was saying 'medaille d'or, Canadienne (gold medal, Canadian). 'I have no idea why I dreamed it. Maybe this says why today.'"

She was the first non-European ever to win a Winter Olympics women's downhill.

Linda, six-hundredths of a second behind, won the silver medal. Austria's Veronika Wallinger was three-hundredths of a second behind Linda. Also within a fifth of a second of the winner were Germany's Katja Seizinger in fourth and combined event gold medalist Petra Kronberger of Austria in fifth.

German minister: Sport must clean up its act

BONN (R) — German sport was told to clean up its act by a government minister Sunday following the suspension of double world sprint champion Katrin Krabbe and two fellow athletes for doping.

Krabbe, winner of the women's 100 and 200 metres titles at last year's Tokyo World Championships, was banned along with 400 metres silver medalist Grit Breuer and former world sprint champion Silke Moeller by the German Athletics Federation (DLV) Saturday for tampering with urine samples.

Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters told the German News Agency ADN that he viewed doping in sport with considerable concern.

"The drug-taking problem presents a considerable danger for the whole of German top-level sport," said Mr. Seiters, whose portfolio includes sport.

"Sport has to find the strength itself to deal with the manipulation of athletes' health and of fair play," he said.

The DLV said in a statement Saturday that urine tests carried out on the three athletes last month at a training camp in South Africa were found to have been manipulated.

The samples taken from the three athletes in South Africa showed no signs of doping but were analysed as coming from the same person.

International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) rules state that anyone evading or doctoring a drug test is liable to the same penalties as an athlete whose test proves positive, and the standard penalty is four years.

The DLV also said it would no longer work with the athletes' trainer, Thomas Springstein.

Springstein told reporters Saturday that the athletes would fight the ban through the courts if necessary.

"I reject the accusation. There is no proof," said Springstein. "Monday is training as usual."



Katrin Krabbe

"The DLV made its decision because it had its back to the wall. They probably felt they needed to achieve something. We will appeal against this suspension," said Springstein.

None of the three athletes was available for comment.

The suspension was front-page news in the Bild Am Sonntag newspaper. But in the sports section Krabbe's fate was the third item after headlines about German speed skater Uwe-Jens Mey's Olympic skating gold and a German soccer story.

DLV President Helmut Meyer said in an interview Sunday with the German Sports News Agency (SID): "This was the worst decision of my life."

"But there was no other possibility, naturally this is a terrible blow to us and for international athletics."

Heiner Jank, manager of Krabbe's hometown athletics club in Neubrandenburg, said: "As long as no final decision has been presented, our club is backing the accused."

Krabbe and Breuer could be stripped of their Tokyo medals if the IAAF upholds the DLV findings that they had also tampered with samples as early as July last year, a month before the World Championships.

Connors eliminated in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (R) — Jimmy Connors gave it all he had Saturday but his grand run fell short as 14th-seeded Malivai Washington took a 6-2 7-5 victory to reach the finals of the \$780,000 Federal Express International Tennis Tournament.

"He played well," Connors, 39, said about Washington. "It's been a long week for me. I played a lot of tennis. It's the best I had today. I can't do any more than that."

The 16th-seeded Connors had ousted top-seeded Michael Stich, the reigning Wimbledon champion, in the round of 16 and followed that by beating Aaron Krickstein in the quarters.

Washington, who made his first appearance in a final just last month in Auckland, New Zealand, will face the winner of Saturday's other semifinal South African Wayne Ferreira.

Unlike his other opponents the week, the 22-year-old Washington appeared unfazed by the on-

court antics of Connors.

"One of my assets is being mentally strong," Washington said. "Also, when you're winning, it's easy to stay focused."

Washington jumped ahead of Connors from the outset, breaking his serve in the first game. Another break in the fifth game gave Washington a 4-1 lead.

The second set was more tightly contested.

Ferreira quickly claimed the other place in the final by beating Amos Mansdorf 6-2 6-3 in 56 minutes.

The 26th-ranked Ferreira has been brimming with confidence since beating John McEnroe in the quarterfinals of last month's Australian Open.

"I believe I have the ability to be in the top 10," said Ferreira, who will be appearing in his first final.

"It's just a matter of keeping things going. If I can do that, I think I have the ability to maybe be top-five, even number one. That's what I'm going for in the years ahead."

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Ruddock stops Page in eighth round

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Donovan "Razor" Ruddock, the last fighter to fight Mike Tyson, ushered in the post-Tyson heavyweight era on a most fitting note Saturday night. Ruddock used his powerful left hook to finally stop a game Greg Page at the end of the eighth round of their scheduled 10-round fight to stake his claim to challenge for the heavyweight title now held by Evander Holyfield. Ruddock, who hadn't fought since losing a 12-round decision to Tyson last June, was rusty but showed flashes of Tyson-like power in his left in stopping Page after a bruising eight rounds in an indoor arena at the Mirage. "I hit him hard and harder and harder," said Ruddock. "I knew Page had come to fight." Also winning by knockout were Bert Cooper and former champion Tony Tucker, while James "boncrusher" Smith scored a unanimous decision win in his heavyweight fight.

Briton wins 1st Vietnam Marathon

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (AP) — A British resident of Hong Kong won Vietnam's first major marathon Sunday after American legend Bill Rodgers buckled under the heat. Some American war veterans ran on behalf of their former comrades-in-arms. Tim Sauter, 36, a British lawyer living in Hong Kong, crossed the finish line in 2 hours, 43 minutes and 26 seconds for his first marathon victory. Luu Van Hung of Vietnam finished second in 2:44:52 and Christian Debenath of France was third. The weekend of races was organized by the Communist government as part of its search for international support and tourism revenue to help its economy, which has sagged under a 17-year-old U.S. trade embargo.

Lens crashes Marseille 2-1

PARIS (R) — French soccer champions Marseille crashed Saturday to only their third defeat of the season when they lost 2-1 away to Lens. Cheered on by a record crowd of 49,000, middle-of-the-table Lens took the lead after just five minutes when striker Roger Boli netted a centre from Jean-Marc Adjovi-Bocco. His brother Basile Boli, the Marseille defender, struck back after 24 minutes, driving home a Trevor Steven cross. Francis Gillot restored Lens' lead in the 60th minute and they clung to their lead despite frantic pressure led by Jean-Pierre Papin and Chris Waddle. Marseille led the first division by a point from Monaco who won their match away to Nimes Friday thanks to a solitary goal by Portuguese striker Gil Rui Barros.

Australian shatters swimming record

SYDNEY (R) — Australian swimmer Keiren Perkins shattered the 800 metres freestyle world record for the second time in six months and set his second world record in two weeks Sunday. Perkins set off at a blistering pace and was inside world record schedule for the entire race to finish in seven minutes 46.6 seconds at the New South Wales Swimming Championships. He slashed 1.25 seconds off his old mark, set in a 1500 metres race at the Pan Pacific Games in Edmonton, Canada, last August. Perkins, 1500 metres freestyle silver medalist at last year's World Championships, also smashed the 1500 metres short course world record in Canberra on Feb. 2.

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♥ J 9 2
♦ J 9 7 4 2
♣ Q 5

WEST
♠ A J 10 8 2
♥ 8 4 3
♦ 6 4
♣ 10

EAST
♠ K Q 8
♥ A Q 10 5
♦ A 6 5 3
♣ A 7

The bidding:
South West North East
1: 1♠ 2: Pass
4: Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of
When this hand was played in a major national championship, 13 of 15 declarers made the obvious play at the first trick. By no strange coincidence, all of them failed to bring home their contract.

North had just about enough to raise to two hearts after the overall. Once the fit was revealed, South was happy to go on to game.

The ten of diamonds was the universal choice for the opening lead. Most declarers covered with dummy's jack, captured East's queen with the ace and then drew trumps.

Declarer then tried to set up a diamond for a club discard. Unfortunately, East won the diamond with the eight and shifted to the jack of clubs, and declarer could not avoid losing a trick in each black suit in addition to the two diamond tricks that were the defenders' due. Down one.

The two successful declarers realized the opening lead marked East with the king-queen of diamonds, so West almost surely had the king of clubs to justify the overcall. Therefore, East had to be kept off lead as long as possible to shut out a play through the ace of clubs.

As the first stage in that campaign the two declarers did not cover West's ten of diamonds with the jack. East could not split the honors without surrendering a diamond trick, and both declarers allowed West's ten to win!

It made no difference what West did next. In the event both shifted to a trump. Declarer extracted all the trumps, cashed the ace of diamonds and exited with a diamond, setting up a long card in dummy.

East shifted to a club, but in vain. Declarer rose with the ace and reached the table with a diamond to discard the losing club on the 13th diamond—making four odd.

Cason caps blazing indoor season with fast 50m win

LOS ANGELES (R) — U.S. sprinter Andre Cason capped his blazing indoor season with a near-record win in the men's 50 metres to the Los Angeles Invitational Grand Prix athletics meeting.

Ukrainian pole vault great Sergei Bubka missed just before midnight in his attempt to better the world record he set last year. Cason, who has set two world indoor records this year, was only one-hundredth of a second away from a third, easily winning the men's 50 metres in 5.62 seconds.

First out of the blocks, Cason led the whole way, but was just shy of the 5.61-second record set in 1980 by Manfred Kokot of east

Germany in the infrequently run indoor 50 metres.

"If I had run through the line instead of leaning I would have run around 5.60," Cason said.

Cason's win came just a day after he set his second world record this year in the men's 60 metres with a time of 6.41 seconds in Madrid, bettering his own record of 6.45 seconds set in Ghent, Belgium, on Jan. 29.

Making his final vault just before midnight, Bubka missed three tries at 6.13 metres.

The 28-year-old Bubka, who set the world indoor record of 6.12 metres last March, had just scraped over the bar on his third try at six metres.

Navratilova wins, Graf ousted at Chicago Slims

CHICAGO (R) — Martina Navratilova, one win away from setting a career singles record, was saved from having to face Steffi Graf for the Virginia Slims of Chicago title as Jana Novotna ousted the top-seeded German in the semifinals.

The 35-year-old Navratilova, who currently shares the all-time mark of 157 career singles titles with Chris Evert, battled back to beat fellow-American Lori McNeil 1-6 6-4 6-4, while Novotna rallied to take a 0-6 6-3 7-5 win over Graf.

Novotna, the third seed from Czechoslovakia, collected herself after the opening-set thrashing by the world number two to continue her success against Graf.

"Even after losing the first set, I was able to put my game together, to calm down, to realise what I was doing wrong, what had to be done," said Novotna.

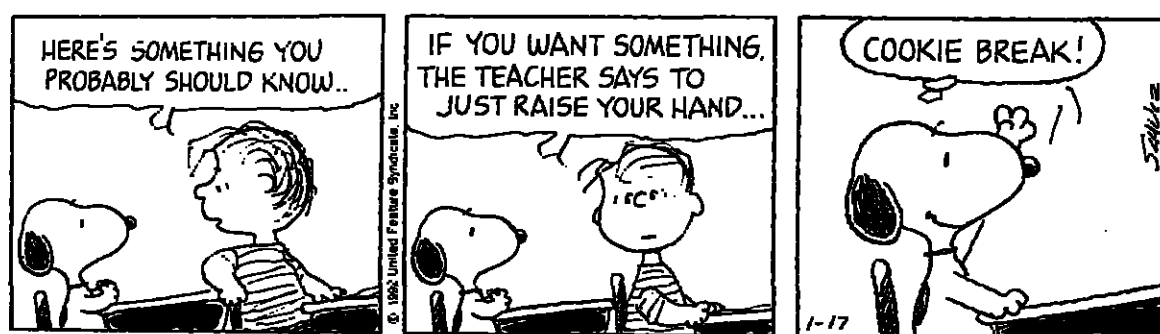
Novotna has never beaten Navratilova in five tournament meetings, although she won a one-set exhibition 6-4 in Columbus, Ohio, prior to this tournament.

"I said I wanted to play Martina," Novotna said. "Now I'll have that chance."

Navratilova will be seeking a \$70,000 first prize along with a new entry in the record book.

"It'll be sweet when it happens," the fourth-ranked Navratilova said about setting the record. "I'm looking forward to that day. It may be tomorrow."

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY 17, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Flighter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: There are no aspects today that will assist you in expanding your present but it is a good day to hold conversations with those who are the most philosophical and upbeat.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid an outside matter that perplexes you early, then you will be able to go after the personal wishes you desire with courage and confidence.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't chase a rainbow after breakfast but put your efforts in uncovering quietly better means by which to gain your private longings.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Put off an obligation you do not understand and go after your own intimate desires and use all possible time to put your energies in these.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't react early to a cold, calculating outsider but instead get into your various career and credit vocational interests, make them work.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Avoid tireless tasks early and instead get into new phases and formulas for making whatever your advanced interests are present in your behalf.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be serious minded early despite a desire to play and look into

the various means by which you can handle practical matters from a new stance.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't be put out by some comment by a family member but look to dynamic individuals and associations who can aid you to obtain your goals.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Start the week at whatever your activities with more enthusiasm and you will find you get much of value done quickly and with style.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A good time to get right into making more up to date whatever your special aptitudes so you can bring them before the public with splendour.

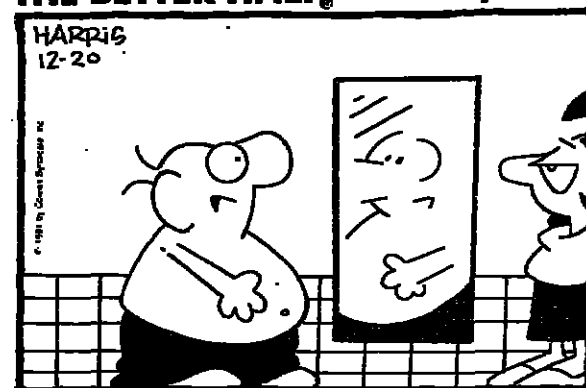
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Your own home should be the centre of your thoughts today and tonight even though it is the first day of the week and outside interests beckon.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This can be a very productive day and evening for you to make new arrangements and putting in motion new formulas and methods in past activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be alert and wide awake so some means now by which you can add to your assets and gain progress where your financial affairs are concerned.

THE BETTER HALF

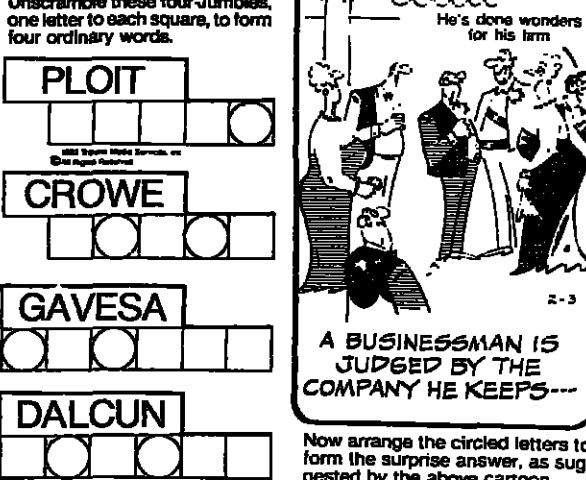
By Harris



"Fat cells are attracted to my body because I'm so adorable!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



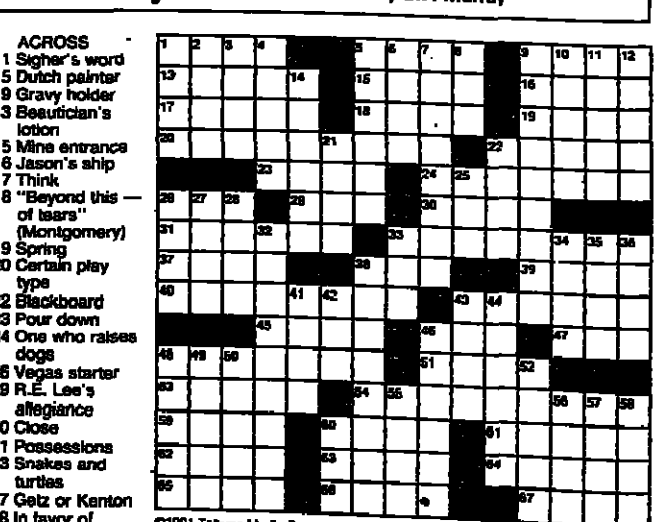
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: GROOM FUDGE OCELOT BROKER

Answer: When you vote a "straw" ticket, it sometimes contains a candidate or two who is this—"CROOKED"

THE Daily Crossword by C.F. Murray



Saturday's Puzzle Solved:



48 Tree, 49 Go on — (rumpage), 50 Drudge, 52 Call off, 55 Puppy cry, 56 Ersatz butter, 57 Having trills, 58 Insects, 60 DDE's command.

Financial
Markets
Jordan Times
in co-operation with
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Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 7 - February 14, 1992)

AMMAN — After falling sharply due to the release of negative unemployment figures in the U.S. at the end of the previous week, the U.S. currency witnessed a gradual appreciation during all of last week's trading sessions. It thus ended the week an average of 4.25 per cent higher against European currencies and two per cent higher against the Japanese yen.

The dollar ended at what proved to be its lowest levels of the week Monday, closing in New York at 1.5780 marks, \$1.8185 to the pound sterling and at 126.78 yen to the dollar. These closing rates materialised on the back of predominantly technical trading activity, in which dealers bid the U.S. currency higher while awaiting the release of new U.S. economic statistics towards the end of the week.

Tuesday witnessed another substantial appreciation in dollar exchange rates, in which the U.S. currency broke through resistance at 127 yen to the dollar. Its rise was attributed to comments by the Fed chairman, in which he stated his opposition to a "weak dollar policy" and maintained that it would be "counterproductive to the U.S. economy."

The dollar continued to rise against European currencies Wednesday, breaching resistance at 1.60 marks. Its rise against the yen was capped by comments from Japan's finance minister and the governor of the Bank of Japan, in which both officials tried to explain Fed's chairman comments and hinted at their opposition to a weaker yen.

Thursday witnessed yet another dollar rally against European currencies, while its rise against the yen was limited by fear of central bank intervention. This latest rally was inspired by the release of U.S. retail sales data for January showing a rise of 0.9 per cent. The positive retail sales figures gave dealers yet another reason to buy dollars, in a market where sentiment has recently become quite positive for the U.S. currency.

After dropping substantially at the release of U.S. industrial production and producer price figures for January Friday, the dollar rallied to close at its highest levels of the week. The dollar hit a low of 1.6130 marks when producer prices showed a 0.3 per cent decline, while industrial production was reported to have declined by 0.9 per cent in the same month. But a combination of technically driven demand at 1.6150 marks and reportedly strong demand from the Middle East soon lifted the U.S. currency to a high of 1.6350 marks. The dollar later closed below its day's high as some dealers squared positions for fear of central bank intervention and ahead of a U.S. holiday Monday.

While expectations of a higher dollar in the medium to long term prevail, short term expectations remain muted in view of conflicting signals from U.S. economic statistics. As a result, observers are predicting large fluctuations for the dollar in the week ahead ranging from 1.62 to 1.6350 marks and from 127.00 to 129.00 yen.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	7. 2. 1992 Close	14. 2. 1992 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.8385	1.7710	↓ 3.67 %
Deutsche Mark	1.5580	1.6265	↑ 4.21 %
Swiss Franc	1.3695	1.4659	↑ 5.21 %
French Franc	5.3120	5.5335	↑ 4.00 %
Japanese Yen	125.33	127.90	↑ 2.00 %

— USD Per STD

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	3.87	4.31	3.93	4.50
Sterling Pound	10.50	10.18	10.50	10.00
Deutsche Mark	9.43	9.25	9.50	9.25
Swiss Franc	7.28	7.13	7.31	7.19
French Franc	10.00	9.62	9.93	9.62
Japanese Yen	5.43	4.81	5.53	4.87

* Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 U.S. Dollars, 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6800	0.6820
Sterling Pound	1.2034	1.2094
Deutsche Mark	0.4178	0.4199
Swiss Franc	0.4638	0.4661
French Franc	0.1231	0.1237
Japanese Yen*	0.5315	0.5342
Dutch Guilder	0.3713	0.3732
Swedish Krona	0.1152	0.1158
Italian Lira*	0.0556	0.0559
Belgian Franc	0.02029	0.02039

* Per 100

A.M.

Muddled OPEC deal spells trouble ahead

GENEVA (R) — The politics of oil has left OPEC with a muddled agreement unlikely to raise prices to the elusive target of \$21 a barrel or smooth relations among diverging factions, oil analysts said Sunday.

After a gruelling four-day meeting, Organisation of Petroleum Countries (OPEC) ministers struck a deal on Saturday to cut output by nearly six per cent to just below 23 million barrels per day (b/d).

The outlook for prices might have been better if OPEC had overcome an impasse over the redistribution of output shares on Friday, when it appeared on the verge of setting a ceiling half a million barrels lower.

Saudi Arabia's insistence on a share no lower than eight million b/d scuppered a deal which every one except the Saudi government wanted.

"The answer from Riyadh was no," a senior OPEC source said. Saudi Arabia and Iran, OPEC's two biggest producers, remained at loggerheads and kept the final deal at arm's length, publicly expressing reservations and disappointing markets hoping for a united front.

"The (output) number is neutral but the fact two key members signed with reservations undermines what they have done and the markets will react appropriately," said Michael Rothman, senior futures analyst at Merrill Lynch.

Waving the closing statement, Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Azgash said: "The Saudi reservation in this press release said that the Saudi oil minister wanted to produce eight million because he received orders from his government."

He added: "Maybe in some areas political matters don't allow the price to go up."

There have been widespread suspicions, denied by the Saudis, that Riyadh is colluding with U.S. President George Bush to keep a lid on oil prices.

"Initially prices might go a little lower for several days, but I think generally prices will stay in the broad trading range we have seen in recent weeks," said Ann-Louise Little, an oil and gas analyst at Lehman Brothers.

The talks highlighted policy differences which have split OPEC since the Gulf crisis.

Saudi Arabia increased production by nearly 60 per cent after the crisis began with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and it does not want to cut back too quickly.

"It is half a swing producer," said a senior OPEC source. "It swings up but finds swinging down a bit more difficult."

Increasing Kuwaiti production and the eventual restoration of Iraqi supplies halted by squabbling between Baghdad and the United Nations seem likely to keep tensions high.

When both are pumping flat out again, OPEC's ability to curb production will be sorely tested.

"It is always easy to gain weight but difficult to shed it. This needs rigid discipline," a United Arab Emirates official said.

Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer put the best face on the deal, saying: "It is much better to arrive at any agreement than none at all."

The accord disappointed Algeria and Venezuela, whose domestic problems made raising oil revenue their most pressing

concern. Algerian Oil Minister Nordine Ait-Laoussine said the troubles at home played no part in the discussions.

"We did not get into that. But it may have been at the back of their minds," Mr. Ait-Laoussine said.

Venezuela's request for a ceiling about one million barrels below anyone else's recommendation reflected the plight of its domestic economy, senior OPEC delegates said.

"This time he was a hardliner," a senior OPEC source said of Venezuela's usually moderate oil minister Celestino Armas.

"It is not enough to bring an improvement in prices which we all (OPEC ministers) hoped for. But it may be enough to arrest the drop, which we all want," Mr. Ait-Laoussine said.

The Algerian oil minister said OPEC will probably have to make further cuts when it meets again in April.

"If everyone's analysis based on this sort of deal we did yesterday proves to be right, then I'm sure there's only one thing we will do — that is have a further cut," Mr. Ait-Laoussine told a news conference.

"Everyone wanted 22.5 (million b/d)," he said.

"If some countries had not come with taboos we could have had 22.5."

Mr. Ait-Laoussine said he hoped that one day other OPEC countries would focus on oil revenue, as Algeria had done, rather than on ceilings and quotas.

"Everyone said here they want to reach (OPEC's reference price of) \$21, but we are disagreed how to get there," he concluded.

Lloyd's insurance losses squeeze the well-heeled

LONDON (R) — Crisis threatened Lloyd's of London last week after painful losses came to light at the world's biggest insurance market on claims from a series of catastrophes.

A cabinet minister said Sunday that the government was keeping a "close review" amid allegations, strongly denied, of sharp practice in the 300-year-old market.

Losses — the first in two decades — amounted to \$900 million in 1988. Lloyd's reports three years in arrears. Financial analysts forecast they may top \$5 billion between 1989 and 1992.

"Lloyd's of London has never faced such danger," said commentator Richard Thomson in the Independent Sunday.

Insurance experts blame the trouble on disaster claims, such as one for \$1.5 billion from the

explosion and fire that wrecked the Piper Alpha oil rig in the North Sea in 1987.

Payouts after U.S. court judgments in cases involving asbestos have also hurt at tradition-bound Lloyd's, where a particular quirk is the way that unlimited liability falls on the people it calls its "Names."

Anyone who can show that he or she is worth at least \$400,000 may put money into the syndicates that underwrite insurance policies.

These Names — more than 20,000 now on the books include 62 conservative legislators — turn a profit in good years.

Some now face possible bankruptcy.

Lloyd's, says Chairman David Coleridge, is "not a kind of Lebanese casino."

But last Thursday angry investors

went to Britain's parliament with suspicions that inside or working Names took the juicier business and duped outsiders into risking bigger losses.

An inquiry was demanded by legislators of the opposition Labour Party to whom, newspapers said, conservative Lloyd's Names had leaked a document on the matter.

Coleridge, whose market is permitted to regulate itself, said in statement that the allegations were unwarranted.

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Saudi authority orders foreign partners in banks to start paying hefty tax

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Foreign bankers who have been enjoying a virtual tax holiday in Saudi Arabia for many years have been told they have to start paying a hefty tax this year, plus a backlog of millions of dollars of deferred taxes.

Bankers in the kingdom said the eight foreign partners in Saudi Arabia's joint venture banks have been given until the end of March to pay the 45 per cent tax on their annual net earning and the first instalment of back payments.

They said they were ordered last month by Department of Zakat and Internal Taxation (DZIT) to pay a full 45 per cent tax on 1991 income transferred to joint venture reserves as well as profit sent out of the kingdom.

They must also pay the first of 10 equal instalments on taxes on retained earnings accumulated during a deferral period which ended in 1990. That period varies according to what year the bank was established.

Bankers could not estimate the amount that Saudi Arabia would raise from the tax. But joint

venture partners have been receiving double figure dividends for years on capital estimated at over \$2 billion.

They said that the tax decision was not a surprise but some bankers were unhappy with some of its provisions.

"When you come into a country you should understand the lay of the land," the manager of one joint-venture bank said.

"If the banks understood they were liable they should have provided for it — the chicken has come home to roost," he said.

"Everyone is very unhappy about it," another manager said. "I think the banks feel the 45 per cent tax rate on transferred profit is too much while the tax on retained earnings is totally unacceptable," he added.

Foreign tax consultants in the kingdom said the rules were established when foreign banks in Saudi Arabia became joint ventures with a maximum stake of 40 per cent during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

But the foreign partners — who include U.S. firm Citicorp, Banque Indosuez of France,

Algemene Bank Nederland and the British Bank of the Middle East — were all given an initial five-year tax holiday.

After it expired, they began paying tax on dividends sent home while also becoming liable on the rest of their earnings.

Tax consultants said Saudi Arabia asked the partners to begin paying the deferred tax in instalments over seven years in 1991, but backed down after the banks protested they might have to pay more than they had received in profits.

This year the DZIT extended the instalment period to 10 years and told the banks they do not have to pay more than 80 per cent of their dividend in any given year as tax, with any additional liability transferred to the following year.

Tax consultants said the tax liability of all banks will probably be higher than the 80 per cent dividend ceiling and the deferred tax will continue to be postponed year after year.

"It simply won't get paid — it's like a permanent deferral," said one.

BCCI depositors in Oman get royal grant from sultan

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) — Sultan Qaboos has come to the rescue of the home depositors in the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) and promised them their savings back in full, a leading banker said Sunday.

Noorudin Nahawi, general manager of Bank Dhofar Al Omani Al Fransi that was ordered to take over the BCCI operation in the country, said the sultan ordered a royal grant totalling "several million riyals" to compensate the estimated 7,000 Omani investors.

Mr. Nahawi, talking to the Associated Press, declined to disclose the exact amount of the royal grant.

An estimated 1.3 million depositors risked losing their cash when BCCI, with 70 branches around the world, collapsed last year under charges of widespread fraud and drug money laundering.

The major shareholders, the Al Nahyan ruling family of Abu Dhabi are reportedly planning compensation of at least 40 per cent and possibly as much as 80 per cent for their home depositors. They are also involved in negotiations with the liquidators on a settlement plan that would pay out 30-40 per cent for other depositors.

"Oman is in effect one of the first countries to ensure that BCCI depositors receive 100 per cent of their money back, just not 20 or 30 per cent as in some other countries," Mr. Nahawi said in the interview.

He said BCCI's customers would have access to their funds in full as recorded on July 5, 1991 when BCCI's Oman operation was closed. No interest would be

paid on saving held during the closure period, he said.

The Omani central bank this weekend said the BCCI acquisition by the Bank Dhofar Al Omani Al Fransi meant BCCI had ceased to exist in the sultanate.

The central bank also informed BCCI borrowers that their obligations, including interest up to the date of the sale, had been transferred to the new bank owners. It requested they "cooperate in settling their debts."

Bank Dhofar Al Omani Al Fransi outbid three other Omani banks Omani Arab Bank, Bank of Muscat and Oman Corporation — to acquire BCCI and in doing so became the sultanate's largest capitalised bank, Mr. Nahawi said.

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Opposition says democracy has passed Uzbekistan by

Baker holds talks in Tashkent

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (R) — An opposition leader complained during a visit by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker Sunday that democracy had passed Uzbekistan by, and he urged Washington to aid reform by establishing ties with the republic.

Abdurahim Pulatov, of Burlik (Unity), the biggest opposition movement, told reporters that while the totalitarian system had been dismantled in Moscow it lived on in Tashkent.

"Politically we have no freedom at all," Mr. Pulatov said as he posed for pictures with Mr. Baker before a meeting with Burlik leaders and another opposition group, Erk (Independence). "I think the sooner diplomatic relations are established with the United States the better it will be for those forces that do not have democratic freedoms," he said.

Mr. Baker said Mr. Pulatov's argument for ties was a strong one.

At a time of far greater press freedoms elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, Western reporters are routinely followed in Uzbekistan and several have been detained for what the government says were violations of travel restrictions.

At least one local journalist was imprisoned during the failed August coup in Moscow for publishing articles critical of the Republican leadership's stance.

But before an earlier meeting

with Mr. Baker, Uzbek President Islam Karimov — widely regarded as resistant to pressure for economic and political reform — accused Western media of using second-hand information to draw conclusions about conditions in his newly independent republic.

He also said Uzbekistan could meet U.S. conditions for establishing relations.

Critics say Mr. Karimov supported the Moscow coup that led to the collapse in December of the Soviet Union and its replacement by the 11-member Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Mr. Baker was on his first visit to Uzbekistan, although he has met the presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, two nearby republics. U.S. officials said Mr. Karimov was irritated it took Mr. Baker so long to come to Uzbekistan, the biggest of the four Central Asian republics.

Baker is visiting the republics as a prelude to establishing formal diplomatic ties. The trip is also designed to draw these predominantly-Muslim states toward the West and dilute any Iranian influence in the region.

In the process, he is discussing with their leaders a list of the principles the United States will use in developing relations. These include respect for human rights, free and fair elections, and recognition of existing borders.

U.S. reporters travelling with Mr. Baker asked Mr. Karimov how he could convince the United States he was serious about meeting their guidelines when opposition political figures were arrested and political parties were unable to function freely.

"Uzbekistan is prepared to have an open society where there would be no dictat of a single political party," Mr. Karimov said.

Asked about a letter President George Bush had sent all the leaders of the new republics, concerning the U.S. principles for developing relations, Mr. Karimov said: "I think we have every opportunity and possibility to follow these principles."

After meeting Mr. Karimov, Mr. Baker said the Uzbek president generally agreed with Mr. Bush's letter.

Even if the United States has diplomatic relations with a state that does not have a perfect record of democratic practices, "we can be a force for seeing that they move in the direction of political freedom," Mr. Baker said.

Meanwhile the United States has agreed to help identify bones thought to be those of Tsar Nicholas II and his family, assassinated in 1918. State Department officials said Saturday. The request for help was put to U.S. Secretary of State James

Baker, who visited the site of the assassination. The Tsar and his family were executed after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. The bones, including some skeletons, are neatly laid out on a table and numbered at a Russian Government Forensic Institute. They are believed to be those of the Tsar, his wife, three of his five children, maid, cook and family doctor.

The Tsar and his family were killed in the basement of a house in Yekaterinburg and the bodies were moved out of the Urals city.

About 10 years ago, bones, thought to be their remains, were discovered in woods 20 kilometres from Yekaterinburg. But they were not exhumed until a year ago, presumably out of fear that it might anger the ruling Communists.

The remains of the Tsar's son Alexei and one of his four daughters are missing.

The house where they were killed was torn down in the 1970s when Leonid Brezhnev was Soviet leader.

But a man who espouses the return of the monarchy is at the site almost every day, explaining the history to tourists and handing out black and white pictures of Prince Alexei.

Mr. Baker visited the Urals region to tour a nuclear weapons research facility, 120 kilometres south of the city.

German MP hangs himself after Stasi allegations

BERLIN (AP) — A German parliament member and former Communist hanged himself in the wake of allegations he worked for the sinister east German secret police, his party's spokesman said.

Gerhard Riege killed himself during the evening, said Hanso Harnisch, spokesman for the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor to the defunct east German Communist Party.

The suicide capped a bleak Saturday for those once linked to the old regime in the former east Germany.

A top east German athlete was banned for purportedly tinkering with her urine sample, a leading former Communist official died after a long illness, and a news magazine reported that a Communist hospital got rid of premature babies by dunking them in buckets of water.

Mr. Riege was elected to the united German parliament's lower house, the Bundestag, during the first post-unity elections in October 1990.

PDS chief Gregor Gysi, who himself is fighting allegations that he worked for east Germany's secret police, said in a statement that he had "no doubt" recent disclosures about Mr. Riege's work with the secret police, or Stasi, led to his death.

A deluge of information from the secret police files, which were opened to controlled public access earlier this year, has implicated scores of people as secret informants.

Aquino: All rebellions in Philippines crushed

BAGUIO, Philippines (R) — President Corazon Aquino said Sunday she had crushed all rebellions in the Philippines and urged the armed forces to ensure a peaceful transfer of power when she steps down in June.

"This administration can legitimately claim the defeat of all threat groups that gnaw at the democratic fibre of our nation," Mrs. Aquino said at a graduation ceremony for Philippine Military Academy cadets in the northern mountain city of Baguio.

"With the sons of this academy, we broke the back of the Communist insurgency, disarmed the rightist adventurists and tempered the secessionists in the south," she said. This, she added, "a shining moment in our history."

Mrs. Aquino dismissed the Marxist New People's Army (NPA), the Muslim rebels fighting for a separate state on the southern island of Mindanao and right-wing army dissidents linked to six coup attempts against her as "troublemakers."

"Soon (they) shall be nothing but occasional nuisance to public order and safety," she said.

Armed Forces Chief General Lisandro Abadía, interviewed after Mrs. Aquino's speech, said there were still 15,000 NPA rebels fighting the government and the military had not yet beaten them.

He said the army was "trying to achieve strategic control by the end of this year," meaning the NPA would no longer be a major threat by then.

NPA strength peaked at more than 23,000 men in 1989.

Mrs. Aquino called on the armed forces to follow her orders strictly to stay neutral in the May 11 presidential election.

It was their "solemn duty (to ensure) a smooth transfer of power" when her six-year term ends



Corazon Aquino

on June 30, she said. Wearing her trademark yellow dress she saluted and handed out diplomas to 199 cadets.

Mrs. Aquino is not standing for reelection and is backing the candidacy of former Defence Chief Fidel Ramos, who helped put down army revolts against her.

While Mrs. Aquino spoke to cadets, officers and diplomats, her sworn enemy Imelda Marcos, one of several opposition presidential candidates, was meeting supporters in another part of Baguio.

Former first lady Marcos told reporters in Manila Sunday the May polls could turn into a "war of widows," saying she believed Mrs. Aquino would be forced to run again to prevent a Marcos comeback.

Mrs. Aquino led a 1986 popular revolt that toppled dictator Ferdinand Marcos and drove him and his wife to exile in Hawaii, where he died in 1989.

Mrs. Marcos, who returned to the Philippines in November, said Mrs. Aquino believed Gen. Ramos was a weak candidate.

Column 800000

New Irish premier signals divorce poll

DUBLIN (R) — New Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds has promised a referendum to review a constitutional ban on divorce in this predominantly Catholic country. Mr. Reynolds, who succeeded Charles Haughey Tuesday, has told his Justice Ministry to get draft legislation ready as soon as possible to precede a referendum. He gave no date for the poll. The new premier told journalists of his "compassionate concern" for couples whose marriages had broken down but said he wanted to strike a balance with the importance of the family unit and "its pivotal place in Irish society."

He added: "I do not want to see the creation of a new poverty section in Irish society." Reynolds refused to be drawn on whether he personally backed calls for divorce. But a number of his cabinet colleagues have made it clear they would support the reform. Political sources said he hoped to put the issue to Ireland's 2.5 million electorate without arousing the fears caused by a previous referendum in 1986.

Peking residents must give blood

PEKING (R) — Peking residents will be required by law to donate blood to ease the capital's shortage, the official New China News Agency said. Donors will get priority medical care and other benefits, the agency said.

The law requires men 18 to 55 years old and women 18 to 50 years old to donate blood if they meet health standards. It goes into effect in July. Peking was only able to supply 51.5 per cent of its own blood needs in 1990, importing the rest from other areas, the agency said. Chinese have traditionally been reluctant to donate, believing that losing blood saps vitality. Two years ago the Ministry of Health began a crackdown on underground blood banks which were profiteering on the sale of blood products. The illegal operations do not screen donors for health risks, take blood repeatedly from the same person and sometimes dilute the blood with a saline solution before selling it, according to an official circular reprinted in government newspapers.

Letter congratulating graduation is 28 years late

ST. PETER (AP) — Mary Briggs received a letter last week from Minnesota's two U.S. senators offering congratulations on her high school graduation. She graduated in 1963. It was a nice letter, telling her they hoped she would continue her education and that she should call if she ever needed anything. "I don't know. It's weird. It's really weird," she said. The letter, slightly yellowed and inside a well-worn envelope, was from Sens. Hubert H. Humphrey, who died in 1978, and Eugene J. McCarthy. Even though she didn't get the senatorial advice about continuing her education until last week, the woman, known as Mary Mears since her marriage more than 20 years ago, went to the Mankato Business College following her high school graduation. In one way, Mrs. Mears is happy the letter came late. "I'm glad it worked out this way. I don't think it would have meant as much at 17."

Springfield man is last member of World War I club

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — A 97-year-old man has become the sole survivor of a World War I Last Man's Club, making him the recipient of the group's bottle of vintage champagne. "I never expected to be the last one," V. Homer Wilson said before receiving the bottle. "I'm very proud of this."

The club's next-to-last member, Angus Armstrong, died two weeks ago at his home in Waco, Texas. Mr. Wilson's Last Man's Club, one of a number of similar groups started by World War I veterans, was formed by American Legion Goad-Ballinger Post 69 at the beginning of the war, in which Mr. Wilson did steevedore work for the navy. The club originally had 781 members, according to post adjutant John Freeman. Mr. Wilson, a retired insurance agent, has missed just two post meetings in the past year, and continues to assist with dinners and ceremonies. He donated the champagne to the post's museum.

More killings reported in Croatia; Yugoslav army to stay in Bosnia

BELGRADE (R) — Two people were Sunday reported killed in an artillery attack in Croatia after the worst week of fighting in the newly-independent state since a truce in Yugoslavia was agreed six weeks ago.

The reports, which could not be independently confirmed, pushed the death toll for the last week to at least 12.

Shelling has been reported in frontline areas of east and central Croatia and around the Adriatic ports of Zadar and Dubrovnik. Croatian radio said two people were killed and three injured late Saturday when the eastern Croatian town of Osijek came under heavy artillery and mortar attack. The roof of Osijek hospital was hit by a mortar which did not explode.

In comments that may worry leaders of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yugoslav Vice-President Branko Kostic ruled out a withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Bosnia. He said the events in Croatia would not be repeated there.

"I will never sign the decision on a withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Bosnia-Herzegovina," Mr. Kostic, acting head of the four-man presidency which has supreme command of the armed forces, told the Belgrade weekly

Ilustrovana Politika.

"All those who think that the scenario of Slovenia and Croatia will be repeated in Bosnia, should know this," he said in the magazine's latest edition.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, an ethnically-mixed republic of Muslims, Croats and Serbs, lies between Croatia and Serbia.

Mr. Kostic's view could cause concern among Bosnia's Muslim and Croat deputies who called a referendum on independence for Feb. 29 and March 1. Serbs in the republic oppose the poll.

Serb deputies agreed at a meeting in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo Saturday that Serb-dominated regions in Bosnia should remain in the Yugoslav Federation.

Politicians in the republic fear that months of fighting between Croatian militias and Serb irregulars backed by the Yugoslav army could still spill over their borders. Serbs in Croatia rebelled after Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia last June. More than 6,000 people have been killed in the almost eight-month conflict.

Many Yugoslavs fear more violence if Bosnia declares independence and asks the army to withdraw. Yugoslavia's southern republic

of Macedonia has called on the army to withdraw by the end of February. Some units have moved out, but Kostic said last week the presidency had not given its approval for a complete withdrawal.

European Community foreign ministers are due to debate Macedonian independence at a meeting in Lisbon Monday.

The United Nations Security Council is expected this week to give the go-ahead for the deployment of a 13,000-strong peacekeeping force for Croatia in an effort to turn the fragile truce into a secure peace.

But some officials are concerned that no peacekeepers will go to Bosnia and there are some differences over the U.N. plan.

Hardline Serb leaders in Croatia oppose calls for Serbs in the enclave of Krajina to disarm and for the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Serb-controlled areas of Croatia.

Yugoslav leaders, who back the U.N. plan, say army troops stationed on Bosnia's border with Croatia are just "three hours away" if Croatian militia launches a strike in Serb enclaves. But a withdrawal from Bosnia would cut the Yugoslav army off from some parts of Croatia.

Zaire reports 13 killed in church protest

KINSHASA (R) — At least 13 people were killed when security forces opened fire on demonstrators in Zaire's capital Sunday, Information Minister Kitege Yezu said.

Witnesses said troops loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko broke up a banned pro-democracy protest organised by Roman Catholic priests.

Mr. Kitege told Reuters the government had confirmation of 13 fatalities and had asked Zaire's Red Cross to help with emergency treatment of wounded victims.

"Two demonstrators were killed after they tried to attack soldiers with knives," Mr. Kitege told Reuters.

Other witnesses said a policeman was shot dead by protesters who seized his rifle.

The protest, organised by priests as a peaceful pro-democracy rally, was declared illegal Saturday by Kinshasa's city governor and was not supported by Zaire's Roman Catholic primate, Cardinal Frederic Etou.

But as early as 8 a.m. Sunday thousands of people filed out of churches singing psalms and holding Bibles and rosary beads.

They called for an immediate resumption of a national political-reform conference suspended last month by President Mobutu Sese Seko's embattled government.

Mr. Kitege said two Belgian priests were arrested.

Burma adds fresh troops on Bangladesh border

DHAKA (AP) — Burma has deployed more troops along its southwestern border with Bangladesh and positioned artillery on overlooking mountains, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Long-range field guns were moved this week atop five mountains in Baidichong and Maungda areas, the Ittefaq newspaper said in an unattributed report.

Fresh troops have been deployed, adding to the 55,000 troops that have been moved during the last 1½ months, the Bengali-language newspaper said. It did not give details.

Another Bengali daily, Inqilab, said two Burmese helicopters flew close to the border Saturday.

Relations between the two neighbours have been seriously strained since an estimated 100,000 Burmese Muslim refugees have arrived in Bangladesh, fleeing what they call a systematic reign of terror by the Buddhist Burmese army.

Burma has given no reason for the military movement along the 280-kilometre border it shares with Bangladesh beyond asserting that it is to contain Muslim separatist rebels in its Arakan province.

Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation of 110 million people, has responded by reinforcing its border with an estimated 45,000 troops.

Bush may be in trouble in New Hampshire primary

NASHUA, New Hampshire (R) — Some Republican backers of President George Bush concede he may be headed for trouble in his first election test Tuesday because of concentrated attacks from conservative challenger Pat Buchanan.

During a weekend of appearances, Mr. Bush is struggling to make up ground lost to Mr. Buchanan in New Hampshire, where presidential candidates are vying for delegates to go to their party's nominating conventions in the summer.

The latest opinion poll said Mr. Buchanan, a Republican television and newspaper commentator, has drawn within 10 percentage points of the president.

Mr. Bush's campaign based in about 100 college students from nearby Boston to swell his crowds.

Mr. Bush even pulled in movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger to try to pump up his campaign — and the actor got bigger cheers than the president.

"I know I'm in a tough race," Mr. Bush told a rally at a school in New Hampshire. "And the stakes are high, not just for me, but they are high for our country, and I need your help."

New Hampshire Governor Judd Gregg, who is Mr. Bush's campaign chairman in the state, told reporters that Mr. Buchanan has been able to gain support by playing on the emotions of a populace suffering through a

third year of recession.

"The president couldn't have picked a poorer state to start his campaign," he said, due to the combined effect of the recession and the political influence of the Manchester Union-Leader newspaper, which endorsed Mr. Buchanan.

Mr. Gregg and Republican New Hampshire Senator Warren Rudman both said Mr. Buchanan could get from 35 per cent to as high as 40 per cent of the vote, which would not be the result the president would like to see as he starts his drive for re-election.

Other Bush political advisers said Mr. Buchanan's support might be in the 30 per cent range. Results of the latest tracking poll by the American Research Group of Manchester gave Mr. Bush 41 per cent and Mr. Buchanan's 31 per cent and 24 per cent undecided.

Mr. Bush had been over 50 per cent a week ago in the same poll. Sen. Rudman said Mr. Bush might have to "take a hit and move on" to the next round of primaries where Mr. Buchanan's protectionist message would not be so strong.

On March 3 Georgia, Maryland and Colorado stage their presidential primaries, which select the delegates to choose nominees for each party to face off in the November general election.

"Whatever Buchanan does, I

don't think it's going to have a major impact on the final outcome in November," Mr. Gregg said.

The comments suggested a strategy in which his supporters may be playing down Mr. Bush's chances so as to make a sizeable victory look bigger, or else they may be trying to play down the importance of New Hampshire in the campaign.

The state represents a small part of the country's population but has been key in presidential campaigns.

Mr. Bush, his Republican rival and the five major Democratic contenders were shifting their campaigns into high gear for the final 48 hours ahead of Tuesday's crucial first-in-the-nation presidential primary.

Through statewide television advertisements Mr. Bush's image was everywhere urging support.

"I ask for your vote to put our nation on notice that New Hampshire Republicans stand united to defeat the liberal Democrats in the fall," the Bush commercial says.

On Saturday Mr. Bush took aim at Mr. Buchanan, saying the campaign "is not about who can trash another's candidacy with some 30-second spot. What it's about is the very serious business of electing a president of the United States of America."

But Mr. Buchanan shot back that he is going to overtake Mr.

Bush Tuesday, telling campaign workers that he was going to "make history."

"Mr. Bush and his friends in Washington are in for a surprise. Come Tuesday, the Buchanan brigade is going to run into the hollow brigade of King George and cut through it like butter," Mr. Buchanan shouted through a bullhorn.

Among Democrats, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, wounded by allegations he misled a military recruiter to get a Vietnam War draft deferment and unproven allegations of marital infidelity which he denies, is pinning comeback hopes on a major Democratic debate Sunday night.

He said he wants to make a strong last-minute impression during the debate to overcome his image problems.

Mr. Clinton, the one-time frontrunner, has lost that position to former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas.

Mr. Clinton called Mr. Tsongas "the hometown favourite" because he lives only a few miles away in Massachusetts and has been campaigning in New Hampshire since last spring.

But New Hampshire voters are known for being unpredictable and the other major Democratic candidates — Iowa's Senator Tom Harkin, Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey and former California Governor Jerry Brown — are looking for upset victories.